

JOHN CLIFFORD

FREE CHURCH LEADER
AND PREACHER



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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JOHN CLIFFORD

"A powerful witness to the interest that there is in human life is the fact that nothing stirs us so deeply or helps us so abidingly as biography. The story of the building up of a man from base to superstructure still enthral's us, and howsoever differently literature may be classified as poetry or as philosophy, as history or as romance, the golden thread that runs through it, and that constitutes its perennial charm, is biography. To look into a man's life, and see the stock of ideas with which he starts ; to recognise the difficulties that he has to face, and that facing he conquers ; to watch him through his successful struggles, sympathetic with his falls, and desirous that he may not only escape falling again, but may derive from these falls inspirations to ascend, we find ourselves led on from stage to stage in the man's career, more and more enriched by what is presented to us, and inspired by what we ourselves hope to profit by."

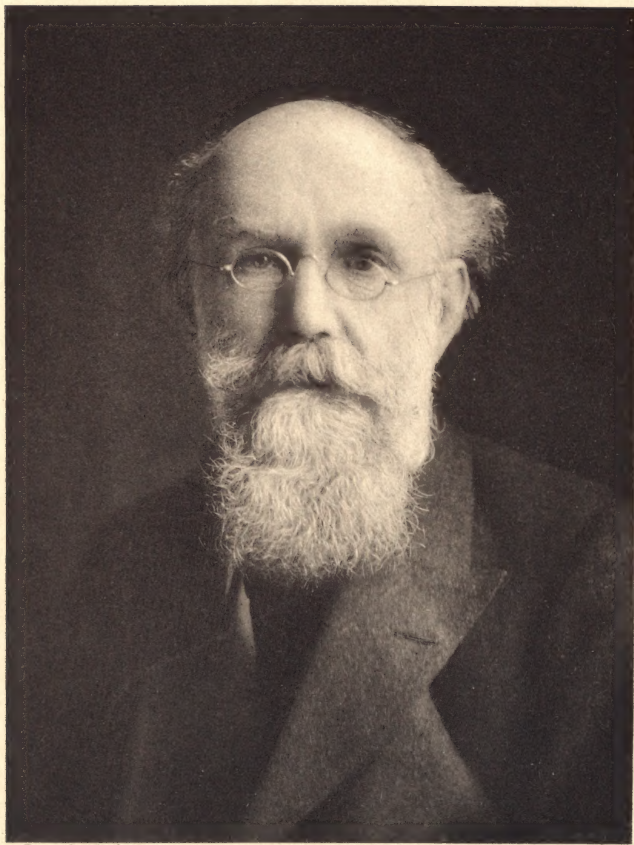


Photo R. H. Mills.

Yours faithfully
John Clifford

JOHN CLIFFORD

M.A., B.Sc., LL.B., D.D.

FREE CHURCH LEADER
AND PREACHER

BY

CHARLES T. BATEMAN

AUTHOR OF "G. F. WATTS, R.A.," ETC.

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PREFACE

BUT for the fact that Dr. Clifford is engrossed in public work he might have been prevailed upon to write his Autobiography. Failing the opportunity to undertake that task, he has kindly placed at the disposal of the biographer many of his papers, some of which have never previously been published. For their presentation, and the connective comment with which these are introduced, he is not responsible. The author alone takes full responsibility.

It is impossible for the author to adequately express his gratitude to Dr. Clifford for the trouble and care with which he has verified dates and particulars submitted to him. He has also made many suggestions concerning sources of information, which have largely contributed to the completeness of the present biography. With the utmost readiness he has rendered these services in spite of his heavy labours in other directions.

Notwithstanding the many biographical articles concerning Dr. Clifford which have appeared, a

large number of the earlier incidents of his life here recorded are entirely fresh. Some he has specially supplied. Others have been obtained from Sawley or Beeston. It was thought desirable to deal with these somewhat fully in order to illustrate his home environment and the determining factors in his early career.

The Biography also aims to make clear and real the great causes to which Dr. Clifford has devoted his long and strenuous life.

The author's thanks are due to the following—Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll for the Introduction; Dr. Alexander McLaren for permission to publish two letters; the Rev. Thomas Law; Mr. John Colebrook, for many incidents of Dr. Clifford's early days and copies of correspondence; Mr. R. Mudie-Smith for Chapter VII.; Rev. J. H. Rushbrooke, M.A., of Derby; Rev. Walter Wynn, of Earby; Mrs. Bennett, Sawley; Mr. F. N. Bateman; and Mr. Christopher Turner, of Sawley.

To the proprietor of the *Westminster Gazette* the publisher tenders an expression of his indebtedness for the courteous permission to reproduce several of Mr. F. C. Gould's admirable cartoons. To Mr. Fisher Unwin also, who has similarly extended the courtesy of allowing "The Preaching Friar" in "The Froissart Chronicles" to appear in the present volume.

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INTRODUCTION

COLERIDGE once said of himself when asked a question about Hamlet, "*I am Hamlet.* Whenever a new duty is presented to me my first impulse is to shrink from the performance of it." With Dr. Clifford, as Mr. Bateman's graphic pages testify, it is far otherwise. From end to end of his wonderful days he has answered each call of duty with fresh energy, fresh zeal, and fresh courage. He has ever been on the side of difficult causes, and in each fight he has shown himself bold as a lion, though always in profound humility.

Dr. Clifford's stupendous energy has no parallel in our time save in the life of Mr. Gladstone, and strenuous though that life was, it was relieved by intervals of rest which have never come to the Baptist minister. The nation knows of his public labours. From the first he has been a fighter, and he has fought with a faithful, indomitable, never-failing enthusiasm. He has experienced victory, but he has had his full share of temporary defeats. From

these he has returned to the charge. He is one of those soldiers of whom it has been finely said, that in battle their hopes flow in quicker than the blood flows out. He has never allowed reverses to cloud his judgment or to embitter his nature. How strong they are, these men who go on without failing, without shrinking, without stooping to base compliances and double ways ! They are inspired by their faith in the final triumph of the righteousness of God over the errors, the wrongs, and the sins of mankind. Earl Russell said once that it took seven years in England to pass any great measure, and the pace has not quickened. In Dr. Clifford the Nonconformists and the friends of freedom have one of these leaders who fight on, unhasting and unresting till the work is done.

Dr. Clifford has fought many a good fight in his lifetime, but none has equalled the battle in which he is at present leading the Nonconformist hosts. Very soon after Mr. Balfour's Education Bill was introduced, Nonconformists saw it to be a measure which, if allowed to work, would in due time extinguish and destroy the rights they and their fathers had fought for. They knew that their enemies had chosen their time skilfully, and that no ordinary effort, no small sacrifice would be required to reverse the measure. In the mercy of God they found their general. Dr. Clifford is no longer a young man. But he is still bright of eye and stout of heart, strong, elastic, ardent, and cheerful. It is almost impossible to

speaking truly of his part in the great Resistance of Non-conformity without seeming to fall into extravagance. Mr. Chamberlain has won just praise, even from those opposed to him, for the immense effort he has made in his fiscal campaign. But Dr. Clifford has made at least half a dozen times as many speeches as Mr. Chamberlain. He has spoken to audiences as large. He has conducted an immense correspondence, writing most of his letters with his own hand. He has made constant use of the press. All the while he has gone on with the work of his great Church, taking often some five meetings on Sundays, while attending to innumerable claims during the week. During the whole of this period he has had hardly any real rest and he is still ready, even beyond his power, to answer every call. These labours have not been allowed to break that devoted study of books without which it would be impossible for Dr. Clifford to live.

Even this does not tell the whole story. I shrink from lifting the veil in which Dr. Clifford has hidden a large part of his work. But I can never forget how, many years ago, Professor Elmslie, my first friend in London, spoke to me about his neighbour. "It is not the public work of Clifford," he said, "great though it is, that touches me most. It is the work he does in secret. From all parts of the country anxious parents write to him about the son or daughter who has been lost in London, of whom they have heard nothing for long, weary months.

Night after night, after the toils of the hard day, Dr. Clifford goes out, like his Master, to seek and to save them that are lost."

As Mr. Bateman shows, Dr. Clifford has been, and is to this day, an ardent student of English and foreign literature. In this country Nonconformists have, till lately, been unable to gain theological degrees by examination. The old Universities cannot recognise by honorary theological degrees the work of scholarly Nonconformists. The Scottish Universities are more free, and they have used their freedom well. Dr. Clifford has gained the highest distinctions at the University of London, and has taken degrees in Arts, Science, and Law. The Prime Minister has sneered at his style, but Mr. Balfour would be the last to set his own University career in comparison with that of Dr. Clifford. As to the question of style, it may be well to quote the judgment of the Primate of all Ireland, Archbishop Alexander. It will be agreed that as an orator, a critic, and a man of letters Archbishop Alexander is easily first in the Anglican communion. In the preface to his volume "*Verbum Crucis*" Dr. Alexander refers to Dr. Clifford's "*Is Life Worth Living?*" He says: "For the statement of these objections to the perfect sympathy of the Incarnation and for the answers of them, the preacher feels that he is very deeply indebted to some sermons by the Rev. Dr. Clifford, whose depth of thought is mated with a singular majesty of expression. The debt

is peculiarly great in the sections numbered 1 and 3."

My first acquaintance with Dr. Clifford was made many years ago through the *General Baptist Magazine*, to which I was a subscriber. The range and the brightness of the short criticisms which appeared there greatly impressed me. Dr. Clifford is at his best, however, when he rises to the high and solemn strain of a prophet. He has sometimes exposed himself to misunderstanding by his eagerness to welcome new thought. Emphatically he "stands up and takes the morning." There is nothing rash or iconoclastic in his theologising, and to the cardinal doctrines of Christianity he firmly adheres. I can testify from conversation with Mr. Spurgeon during the Down Grade controversy that he declined to rank Dr. Clifford among the heretics. He spoke with warm admiration of Dr. Clifford's fine character, and believed that on various points of controversy he was misunderstood.

The great secret, however, of Dr. Clifford's power is neither in his accomplishment nor in his energy, nor in his fervid speech, but in his noble and unselfish life. From first to last he has disdained all personal interests and aims. He has been utterly careless of money. He has never sought any honour or any credit. The primacy that has come to him has come almost in spite of himself. He has worked for the cause, and he has firmly believed that though the self-hood of man is an instrument poor in itself, it

may be the means whereby noble ends are accomplished. He has never been one of the petulant children who refuse to play unless the rules of the game are altered to suit them. Once the triumph is secured he steps aside and lets others divide the honours as they will. He passes on to new work, not beaten yet, nor intending to be beaten. This temper explains the curious stillness and gentleness of Dr. Clifford's manner in private life, always restful and often gay. He is of all preachers I have ever known the man who has the best right to expound the Sermon on the Mount. The true primacies of life cannot be held back, and Nonconformists have recognised their chief. What honours they can give to him have been fairly won "if to maintain the honour of ancestry it is sufficient to be wise in council and brave in execution—to be boldest among the bold and gentlest among the gentle."

Serus in cœlum redeat!

W. ROBERTSON NICOLL.

CHAPTER I

PARENTAGE AND UPBRINGING

THE traveller by the Midland Railway from London to Manchester, before he reaches Derby, may or may not be conscious of a tall church spire on his left hand which travels with him for many miles. It stands out as a beacon above the flat country on the borders of Leicestershire and Derbyshire, and is situate in the parish of Sawley. Under its shadow John Clifford "in low estate began," like so many of Britain's distinguished sons and daughters, and was born into the inspiring succession of such men as John Bunyan, Carey, Livingstone, Moffat, and a host of others.

The date of his birth was October 16, 1836, the first in a family of seven, which included two boys and five girls. His father, Samuel Clifford, probably descended from the Yorkshire Cliffords, carried the humiliating remembrance that his great grandfather had owned a fair amount of landed property in Sawley at one time. Alas! indulgence in drink by one of the latter's successors had brought disaster on the

family fortunes, and caused the broad fields to pass into other hands. At the date of the father's marriage to Mary Stenson he was employed as a warp machine worker in Shaw's yard, Sawley. These machines—of which there were only half a dozen in the village—were originally worked with hands and treadle, afterwards by hand only, for making blonde silk lace. The women and girls in the village found employment in other departments of lace making, and John Clifford's mother, before her marriage, worked as a lace runner. This industry could be pursued at home, and in those days nearly every house in Sawley possessed a wooden frame for the purpose. To-day there are still a few frames, but these are now principally used for flowering bridal veils.

It is somewhat difficult to trace the ancestry on either side, but evidently the Cliffords were old residents in Derbyshire. In the father's case he came from Wesleyan Methodist stock. The mother's father worked as a shoemaker in the village, and was closely associated with the little Baptist Church. This community, testifies Dr. Clifford, was "pervaded with the Puritanic ideals of singleness of heart, fidelity to conscience, study of Scripture and devotion to God." On the Stensons' side, the family traditions and aspirations centre round the humble meeting house, and their dearest purposes in life seemed bound up with its welfare and prosperity. Their generous gifts—such as new

seats—for the chapel are still remembered, whilst Mrs. Clifford's three brothers, Silas, John, and Elam, all entered the Baptist ministry.

John Clifford's uncles deserve more than passing reference, not alone because of their fine characteristics, but also on account of the influence they exerted upon the nephew. Silas became pastor of the Church at Retford, and by unceasing work and self-denial hastened his death, which occurred at the early age of thirty-three. Before John had entered the ministry, his mother was constantly urging him to spare himself, for otherwise he would pass away in decline like his uncle. But though the latter's life-work was short, he left behind the memory of a saintly life consumed by the thought of "so much to do, so little done." Without repine he laid down his life for what he conceived to be his duty.

The second, John Stenson, after pursuing a scholastic course at Borough Road Training Institution in connection with the British and Foreign School Society, became Sunday evening preacher at Sawley, and also master of the Baptist school, to which further reference is made in this chapter. He passed the age of threescore and ten, and died much respected by those who remembered his good and useful work, both in the school and pulpit.

Elam Stenson, who lived to the age of eighty-two, probably affected his nephew to the greatest extent. In his nineteenth year he was baptized in the Trent,

and afterwards held pastorates—in addition to acting as the village schoolmaster—in various churches in Cheshire, Cambridgeshire, and Nottinghamshire. When he became too aged for full pastoral work he served the churches in the latter county, and those in the neighbourhood of Kirkby and Kirkby Woodhouse, by occasional visits. His stipend was never large. Yet he “was passing rich on forty pounds a year,” for, says his nephew, “he had few wants and large economies. Indeed, his economies were always miraculous to me, and remain so to this day. Didn’t he complain? Never! It did not occur to him. He had chosen his vocation and all that it meant, and he was content to fill it. In a diary that he kept, he finished every year with an ‘Ebenezer,’ and in a batch of his letters before me, gratitude and cheerfulness are his dominant notes. . . . And when he came to the end he betrayed no feeling of the mystery and obscurity of our condition, but with the calm confidence of one who knew—

“‘Fearless he entered Jordan’s flood;
At peace with Heaven he closed his eyes;
His only trust was Jesu’s blood,
In sure and certain hope to rise.’”

It is abundantly clear that John Clifford’s Puritan strain came from the Stensons. I have endeavoured, without success, to trace back his ancestry for five or six generations in the hope of discovering a Cromwellian soldier who struck a blow for liberty under

the Protector's flag, or the record of some Brownist or Anabaptist relative who was imprisoned because, like Bunyan, he would preach on the village green. If descent counts for anything there must surely be one such amongst his forbears.

The house in which he first saw the light and spent the first three years of his life stands to-day in the village street—a three-storey semi-detached gabled building—exactly as it did then. There are still one or two aged residents in Sawley who remember him at this period, and tell of the delight he experienced with the present of a toy waggon, containing sacks of corn. His great diversion then was to draw it up and down the little ascent leading to the house. The five-barred gate, leading to the drive of Mr. Bennett, a well-known Baptist, upon which the toddling boy loved to climb and swing, is still pointed out to inquirers. This exploit, he says, constituted one of his earliest reminiscences. Still another childish incident. One day he was playing marbles with a close companion—who is still in the village—when they got to cross purposes, and the other called him, "Old Jack Clifford!" in expectation of stirring his anger. Whether this proved successful I am not informed, but as the occurrence happened near the shop where his father worked the latter overheard the taunt, and gravely rebuked the boy by saying, "You must not call him Jack! His name is John!"

Sawley itself possesses no special points of beauty

or general interest. In its older portion it still preserves the characteristic features of the past three or four generations. Only a few yards away from his birthplace stands the little Baptist Church in the midst of its burial-ground, whilst in the same boundary is a day school connected with the denomination. This possesses an interesting and suggestive history. Five or six decades ago there was only one elementary school in Sawley, connected with the parish church. The clergyman in charge took advantage of his position and ruled that all scholars who did not attend his Sunday school must pay double fees at the day school. But relief from this oppression came at last. Mr. Wm. Parkinson, a well-to-do local Baptist, and the ancestor of the Bennetts, left a sum of £400 in 1844 to found a day school under the auspices of the Baptist Church, but open to all. As already stated, the uncle of John Clifford was its first master. The school has proved most successful both in numbers and educational efficiency, and to-day there is an average attendance of 125 scholars with a staff of four teachers. When the new infant schoolroom was built a few years ago the erstwhile village boy, who had made "by force his merit known," was remembered by the countryside and came down to perform the opening ceremony.

Time brings many compensations for sectarian inequalities and meannesses. Surely few can be more adequate than that which has recompensed the narrow-minded action of an exclusive sectary by the

valiant service on behalf of religious freedom and educational efficiency performed by Sawley's Non-conformist son in these latter days.

We have seen the circumstances and conditions under which John Clifford was born. Let us now obtain a glimpse of his home. The humble callings of both father and mother were no measure of their sterling characters and Christian piety. He has left on record an eloquent description of their virtues. "Others amongst us," he once said to a large gathering of Baptists, "cherish in the home of our affections the unforgettable portraits of two personalities radiant in the beauty of saintliness and adorned with the halo of self-denying patience and unflagging toil. And as we remember that their self-denials have become our wealth, their sufferings the draughts of our joy, their pain and spiritual yearning our life and strength, we say, 'Ah, sainted pair of toilers! Stained with the dust of the road of life, if we forget you may our right hand forget its cunning and our tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth.'"

If one may analyse the influence wielded by father and mother upon the boy one would say that in the latter case it proved of a winsome character, whilst in the former it was somewhat stern. Of his mother he says, "When I think of her I am reminded of the words of Tennyson, 'Happy he with such a mother! Faith in womankind beats with his blood, and trust in all things high comes easy to him.' She was a noble woman, highly intelligent, and full of sanctified

common-sense ; a fine, devout character. We feel great reverence as well as love for her, for she practised daily what she preached."

On one occasion I asked Dr. Clifford as to the relative forces of his parents' influence. "My father," he explained, "seemed to have been brought up on the severities of Puritanism, whilst my mother exhibited its gentle and more joyous side. His was of a somewhat stern and rigid description. Hers was sweet and hopeful. He thought that in order to become strong and vigorous one should bear hardships. For instance, he would never wear a muffler for this reason, and I often used to hear my mother and father have a friendly discussion on the point. He would argue that the absence of throat covering made that part of the system less sensitive to cold and naturally hardened the individual, whilst my mother thought that the risks were too great and would vote for the muffler.

"All that was punitive came from the paternal side of the household. If I had been punished (as I was once, I remember), by my father, and sent to bed without supper, my mother contrived to come up to my bedroom with a word of sympathy, a gentle rebuke, and something more material. All the softer pathetic things in life seemed to be associated with her influence.

"My father does not seem to have thought it any hardship that I should have to get up at four o'clock when I started work in the



Photo. Mr. J. Lack, Loughboro'.

DR. CLIFFORD'S BIRTHPLACE.
(The arrow indicates the house.)

factory. He used to do it as a boy, therefore there could be no reason why I should not rise at that time. When he called me in the morning he would lift me bodily out of bed and place my feet on the cold plaster floor and away from the piece of carpet by the side of the bed. In this way he thought to wake me up and prevent the return to bed.

"He never prayed audibly in the family, for he used to say that he did not possess the gift of utterance. He used to sing, however, for he loved singing, and was the leader of the chapel choir at Beeston. My mother prayed beautifully, and not only at home, but at the prayer-meetings held by the church would take part in the devotions."

With Tennyson he says—

"At one dear knee we proffered vows,
One lesson from one book we learn'd
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows."

"It was the thought of my mother's prayers," he continued, "which made me invite women to pray at the week-evening meetings when I first settled at Praed Street. This caused some surprise at first, for the members had not been accustomed to such service on the part of woman."

It will be readily perceived that the father was a man of marked individuality. He had a strong leaning to Chartism, and greatly admired Thomas Cooper,

the Chartist leader of Leicester, with whose sentiments he also imbued his eldest boy. Those were days in which the workers lived a dog's life. An old school friend of Dr. Clifford,¹ and a resident at Beeston, where the family afterwards removed, has given me a black picture of this period, antecedent to the repeal of the Corn Laws. The pay of the labourer was 8s. or 9s. per week. If he possessed a family, as in the case of the narrator's father, it was impossible for the children to be adequately fed. Before he left home in the morning he would mark the loaf as a safeguard against the hungry children surreptitiously cutting off a slice. Prevented from satisfying their hunger in this direction, they would steal a swede or turnip from the fields. In the winter, when work was scarce, the whole family perforce entered the poorhouse if there was room, but sometimes even this relief was denied them owing to its crowded state.

Such was the condition of families known to the Cliffords. Can it be wondered that the iron entered deep into the heart of the father, and that, with Ebenezer Elliott, he prayed, "When wilt Thou save the people?" With much sympathy he looked to

¹ When I saw this old villager he was reading Lord Rosebery's speech delivered in South London (November 25th) on the Fiscal Controversy, and quite naturally he observed, "Those who want a return to Protection should have some idea of what the days before the repeal of the Corn Laws were like. They would not desire then to go back to those times."

the efforts which Thomas Cooper and other Chartist leaders were then making to rouse the country to the position of the working men and the labourers. From the father John thus obtained his first lessons in politics, and these have never been forgotten, but have coloured and influenced his whole life.

Whilst speaking of the father's characteristics it must not be forgotten that when the boy needed mental or moral stimulus he obtained it from him, and the latter's unbending adhesion to principle constitutes a remembrance which has always proved of great assistance to the son.

When the boy was three and a quarter years of age the family removed to Beeston in Nottinghamshire, and after a brief sojourn in Lenton of about three years (from seven to ten inclusive), ultimately settled at Beeston. The education he received proved of the most limited character, and was inferior in quality. To make matters worse it terminated when he was between the age of ten and eleven, in order that he might commence work in the lace factory where his father was employed. Technically speaking, he started as a "jacker-off." In 1900 Dr. James Murray, the editor of the Oxford Dictionary, noted the fact that Dr. Clifford began his business life in this capacity, and asked him to supply the definition of the term for the Oxford Dictionary, adding that explanations of such mysteries ought to be given, when no dictionaries have them. The work of a "jacker-off" in a lace-

factory is to remove the last pieces of thread remaining on the bobbins used in making lace, and fasten them together in order that a continuous thread may be made which can be used again.

These were days before the Factory Acts, and life in a factory to a lad of tender years proved of an excessively arduous description. At busy seasons there were often long spells of work lasting from one day on to the next, and it was no unusual thing for the boy to go right through a whole day and night to the next day without rest. Under the circumstances it is scarcely surprising that his health suffered, and in order to recuperate he obtained outdoor employment in the nursery-grounds of Messrs. Pearson, which were situated in the adjoining hamlet of Chilwell. He remained in the gardens for a period of a little more than a year, and then returned to the factory in a somewhat improved position to that which he had previously occupied.

This advance—for it was an advance in social status—was primarily due to his persistent endeavours from the time he left school to improve his scanty education. In these efforts he was assisted by his Sunday-school teacher, Mr. Septimus Thornhill, who, in the long winter evenings, invited him home to his cottage, and there gave him lessons and lent him books to read. The importance of this influence upon the lad cannot be over-estimated. It unlocked for the first time stores of knowledge hitherto inaccessible, and though it was only ele-

mentary, suggested possibilities of still further mental improvement.

There is one other inspiration which came to him about this time, and is still vividly in his memory to-day. "I can never forget," he says, "that one of the earliest impulses to my intellectual activity came from the widow of a distinguished Unitarian minister. Mrs. Turner, of Lenton Fields, Nottingham, used to visit my home when I was a little boy. I see now her tall figure, her serene and beautiful face ; I hear her gentle, suasive voice ; and I feel as though her words gave me some faith in myself, and constrained me to look at the future through mists of hope. I thank God for her serene and strong ministry to me."

Miss Lucy Tagart, on reading this eulogy, wrote to Dr. Clifford, January 14, 1901, telling him with what a rush of joy she read his words about Catherine Turner of Lenton Fields, Nottingham. "As one of her pupils," she said, "and privileged to be in after years her friend, I was just feeling how I missed her wise counsel and sympathy ; how no biography of her had been written, and she was passing from remembrance. She was really a saint in the modern way, living so simply, giving away her time and herself and her money to rich and poor—really her cruse of oil was inexhaustible. Strangest of all, she never grew old, although she lived to be past ninety. She was still fresh and youthful in her interests, never became conservative,

but would listen to the crudest theories, the wildest dreams with the most patient and encouraging spirit, gently leading the youthful thinkers into practical paths. Her friendship with Harriet Martineau was a curious episode not without a lasting influence. I thank you heartily for your kind mention of so revered and loved a friend."

Beeston has now lost some of its old characteristics and become practically a suburb of Nottingham. The factory where John Clifford worked, as well as the cottage where he lived, has been pulled down. Personal incidents connected with a period of fifty years since are difficult to recall, for the participators are now few or far between. There are some, however, who still remember John Clifford as a boy. They speak of his sprightly bearing, his love of fun and his studious habits. They tell you of trivialities interesting to them, but of no value outside the village. They had not foreseen the place that the boy was destined to fill, though one dear old soul informs you that a relative had prophesied he would become a doctor one day because of his learning!

CHAPTER II

DESIRE TO ENTER THE MINISTRY

THE influences upon John Clifford's early days were determined by the Sunday School, the Church, and the home—a trinity of agencies which are paramount in the organisation and teaching of later Puritanism. And the greatest of the three was the home. In the present chapter I hope to show their relative importance upon the young factory lad.

At fourteen years of age he was converted. It was an instantaneous revelation of the Divine love, and occurred during the progress of a prayer-meeting at the Beeston Chapel when the hymn was being sung—

“The soul that longs to see My face
Is sure My love to gain,
And those that early seek My grace
Shall never seek in vain.”

The act of allegiance to God had its resultant effect upon his outward life, and he became a marked lad in the factory and village. Throughout the fifty years which have since elapsed he has never forgotten

that vivid period in his Christian experience. It is to him the occasion when he definitely "put on Christ," accepted His sacrifice, and resolved by the Divine grace to make the Father's will the purpose of his life. In this resolve he was greatly helped and encouraged by his wise and earnest Sunday-school teacher, who proved a real friend to him, and generally watched his spiritual and mental improvement.

Soon after this time the desire to enter the ministry commenced to assert itself. Exactly how it developed cannot be stated, but it seems sufficiently clear that his mother and grandmother and his three uncles were all factors in the decision. He says now that he does not remember any one particular instance which prompted his choice. Though the idea evolved gradually, it had always been part and parcel of his nature owing to his environment. His mother and grandmother particularly sought to inspire him with the example of his pastor relatives. These three uncles afforded an illuminating instance of ministerial duty accomplished well and faithfully under cramped and trying circumstances, and with the noblest purpose in view. Taking them as an example, he could not see before him a path leading to an easy and comfortable profession. Instead, he saw the lowly lot of a consecrated Nonconformist pastor—denied access to the Universities and treated by a privileged Church as an uncultured and only slightly educated layman.

To understand the character and influence of one of these Puritan saints, let me quote what John Clifford afterwards wrote concerning Elam Stenson, who at the time of the visit here described was pastor of Nuneaton Church, Warwickshire. He visited his uncle just when his own destiny in life was shaping itself:—

“ His severely simple attire and sober grey trousers, and black vest and coat ; his necktie of fleckless white ; his perfect, unvarying neatness ; his serene placidity of demeanour ; his pleasant, genial face ; his calm, quiet flow of speech ; his faultless order and regularity ; his step, quiet and still as footfalls on the snow ; and the singular sweetness and purity of the atmosphere of the home, all come back to me to-day as the picture of a plain and unpretending life of real goodness—a life without passionate thrills and exhausting excitements, but full of heavenly peace and real service ; a life shut out from the hurrying and noisy world, but shut in with the airs of heaven and the visions of eternity. I recall the wondering awe with which I looked at his stock of sermons, written mostly on slips of waste-paper, which was sadly discoloured ; writing small but distinct and very closely packed, as though paper cost something. I see now the outline of a discourse on the consolatory statement of Paul, that ‘ saints ’ are now ‘ made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.’ But I was most impressed with his talk on preaching, and gained from it an idea of

the Puritan 'sense of God' that has never left me. To him God was not, as Matthew Arnold suggests in his criticism of Puritanism, 'in the next street.' He dwelt in the soul as in a home. He was the One Reality, the Actual Living and Ruling Jehovah. With a subdued reverence and contagious awe, he spoke as though God was the real tutor of the preacher, and the true training of the minister came from Him. College training was good and necessary, but the genuine preacher was made by habitual communion with, and unreserved subjection to, the Eternal. I believe the talks I had that week made me, in degrees I can never estimate, 'a partaker of the Divine nature.'"

Some men have found their vocation after bitter and prolonged struggles, and at an advanced period in life after many disappointments, but one can name great preachers—such as Dale, Spurgeon, Parker, and McLaren, who early disclosed their tendencies. Unmistakably Dr. Clifford belongs to the same class. There can be little surprise that he chose to be a minister after the evidence we have adduced. His motives for the choice are also absolutely above suspicion. Neither the emoluments of the office nor the social prestige had ensnared him, but a Divine call, clear and distinct, which could not be resisted. The love of humanity had already commenced to assert its power in his soul, and he felt irrevocably compelled to take the minister's office. Half a century has rolled by since, and he has never

regretted his decision as a lad, nor has he the slightest preference for a different place.

At Beeston the family attended the Baptist Chapel—in communion with the General Baptists—which was then under the pastoral care of the Rev. Richard Pike, son of the first secretary of the General Baptist Missionary Society, and it will be seen that he cherished and fostered the intention which the lad expressed. There are three entries in the Church minutes, probably made by Mr. Pike, which I have copied through the kindness of the present pastor, the Rev. Willott Rice, directly referring to this period of John Clifford's history:—

"*April* 29, 1851.—John Clifford and Alfred¹ Walker accepted. The baptism first Sabbath after Whitsuntide."

"*April* 18, 1854.—That John Clifford be recommended to the Academy (Leicester)."

"*August* 7, 1855.—John Clifford to preach in the morning if the minister cannot."

There were also certain recommendations as to posters and hand bills for the purpose of announcing the service.

In the three years between the first and second entry there were several indications that he was becoming qualified for the ministerial vocation. "No sooner was I converted than the preaching passion took hold of me and swayed me," he said, and this "passion" manifested itself under somewhat humorous

¹ This, I am informed, must be a mistake for William.

circumstances, though to him it was a downright serious attempt to perfect his ability as a preacher. The incident has been narrated by Dr. Clifford in a sketch of "My First Sermon."¹ It has been often quoted, but being an essential part of his early history it is necessary to include an extract here. He graphically describes the long, narrow schoolroom and the funereal aspect of its surroundings. Three candles had to suffice for light, and these but made the gloom and darkness discernible. "One candle was on the mantelshelf over the fire-place, for the group of listeners; the other two were placed on what was called the pulpit, at the end of the room furthest from the fire, the pulpit being little more than a rude, long box, without a lid, and with one side knocked out, and then set on four legs and topped with a piece of wood to serve the purpose of a desk."

He was a nervous, sensitive boy, impressed with the solemn duty of preaching. "In much fear and trembling," he says, "I entered that pulpit, not terrified by the audience, for the living figures of which it was composed were scarcely discernible in the gloom, but agitated by feelings of awe and dread—awe in undertaking so responsible a task as that of preaching the Word of God, and dread that I should fail in my task. I was too timid to snuff the candles, lest in my nervousness I should repeat the mistake of T. N., who on a former occasion had imperilled the

¹ "My First Sermon," edited by Mr. F. A. Atkins of the *Young Man* (Jas. Clarke and Co.), 1894.

seriousness of the service by extinguishing the dim light he so sorely needed."

Of the sermon itself he says—

"The text was significant in many ways. It was Psalm xxxi. 19: 'Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that put their trust in Thee before the sons of men!' What optimism shines through that inspiring outburst! What breadth of view! How cheerful and sustaining its judgment of the present! How exultant its outlook! How grateful for the enriching past! I have often thought since that the text selected by me when I was only a little over fifteen years of age was prophetic of the optimism of which I have been so often accused, and in which I rejoice still, with unwithered faith and unrelaxed grip.

"The sermon was written, and I read it without adding, as far as I remember, a solitary word; for I was in fear of the disaster that might befall me, if by any chance I once lost the run of my written composition. The ground covered could hardly be narrow; for when a youth has little to say, it is not only wise but necessary to take a wide field. I did. Indeed, from the beginning I have had a preference for subjects of extensive range, affording 'ample room and verge enough' for everything I could wish to say. My deep reverence for the Scriptures, combined with the lesson my mother taught me, that the work of the preacher was to express the *real meaning*

of the Word of God, has always kept me from the perilous practice of taking 'snippets' of the Bible and using them as mere 'motto' texts. The subject of my sermon was 'God's provisions for believing men.' There were four divisions, very obvious and very simple, and not a little crude: (1) God's goodness stored in Creation; (2) in Providence; (3) in Redemption, and (4) in heaven; each division ending with the text, and the whole finishing with a reference to the good fortune of men who fear God and put their trust in Him before their fellows.

"My Sunday-school teacher had given me Dr. Thomas Dicks' 'Christian Philosopher,' published by William Collins; at that date a wonderful book, and quite a revelation to me, and the first division of my sermon contained abundant proof that I was greatly indebted to the contents of Dr. Dicks' famous work. Another book I had read in part—it had been lent me—'The History of Redemption,' by Jonathan Edwards, and it was laid under contribution for the second and third parts. On the fourth division I knew, or thought I knew, more than I do now. How poor and feeble that sermon was I need not say. I was not half-way through my sixteenth year. I had left school before I was eleven, and had worked in the lace factory, when the Factory Acts were not yet applied. To be sure, I had sought knowledge early and late, from books and from men, in the street and in the fields; but I am appalled at

the crudities of these first efforts, and surprised that the 'Secret Society' should have arranged for me soon afterwards to speak at the Young People's Prayer-meetings held on Sunday evenings before the usual service. This I regarded as a favourable verdict on my first sermon, and complied at once with their request."

One of John Clifford's companions on that occasion still lives in Beeston. He is now seventy-two years of age, and with his white hair and long white beard makes a venerable picture. He distinctly remembers the incident, and substantiates in every way the narrative which is here quoted. As he sat in his armchair before the fire and chatted to me of those days fifty years since, the spirit of Whittier's "Might have been" suggested a vivid contrast. Both John Oldham and John Clifford were boys together in the same village, they had been filled with similar aspirations to become preachers, and they had taken a share in Church work. Then their roads had parted. One had no desire to leave Beeston. He steadily pursued the common round of everyday duty, and with diligence undertook his responsibilities and duties as a humble Christian man. To-day beyond his immediate circle he is unknown. John Clifford had aspirations in another part of the world, and planned deeper and wider. To this end he laboured and studied. By sheer hard work and indomitable energy he left his friend of boyhood's days far behind. The contrast

enables one to measure somewhat fairly his long climb from then until now.

Two of the books he read about this time were Emerson's "Twelve Lectures on History, Compensation," &c., and Knight's "History of England" in several large volumes. Emerson from that time forward remained an inspiration of his life, and the little volume is now one of his most cherished literary treasures.

Mr. Pike soon heard of these preaching services, and wisely encouraged John Clifford to pursue his studies. He invited him to prepare a specimen sermon for criticism, and this the lad successfully accomplished. To this sermon he gave the title, "The leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy," and together they discussed its matter and method. Apparently Mr. Pike was satisfied, for he proposed that John should become one of the Nottingham district local preachers. Before admittance to this body candidates were expected to preach a trial discourse in the Church which called them. Accordingly he determined to deliver his first sermon again, and alluding to the fact, says, "I re-made it and re-made it on my feet as I walked by the side of the Trent, flowing under the waving woods and romantic heights of Clifton, or as I strolled along the sides of the 'spinney' at the other end of the village, cheered by the birds warbling in the trees."

His first appointment on the plan of the Nottingham Local Preachers' Association was to the village

of Stapleford, three miles from Beeston. Of this preaching experience he wrote in the *General Baptist Magazine* (1875):—

“On a beautiful summer’s Sunday afternoon I set out from Beeston to the village of Stapleford, distant a little more than three miles, to try to preach. I was but a lad, with only village experiences, and in much fear and trembling the tremendous task was undertaken. I had twice before battled my way through a discourse in the presence of a public assembly; and with much more ease and courage accomplished a similar work in the hearing of four or five young men. The special terrors of a preaching visit to Stapleford sprang from the fact that it was a journey to the unknown, and who could tell what might be there?

“The sermon was on ‘Faith without works is dead.’ It was fully written out and it was as fully read. There was no looking round the little room on the part of the speaker, no eye for the audience; the steadfast gaze was on the MS., and great was the relief when, in a hot perspiration, he uttered the customary ‘Amen’ and proceeded to announce the hymn which was to conclude the service.

“The sermon was heard in quietness by the patient people. How much we ministers owe to the good folks who listened, or went to sleep, as we gave vent to our slender reading, inexperience, and ambition!

“Whether my Stapleford audience went to sleep

or not I cannot say. I think they ought to have done so; but certainly they did not assist in the sermon as one did a year and a half afterwards in the neighbouring village of Sandiacre. Then I was fully established as a 'local' and had my 'appointments.' Gradually the amount of written paper for a sermon had been diminishing; and on this occasion I was talking, without a fully written discourse, about the interview of Christ with Nicodemus, and unfortunately called the latter Nathanael, and instantly a generous soul shouted out at the top of his voice, 'Thou mean'st Nicodemus, lad!'"

The second extract from the Beeston Church records is another step upon his ministerial career. That his pastor and fellow-members did not act hurriedly is apparent, and their foresight and wisdom have been abundantly evidenced since. We deal with his college career in the next chapter, but before passing from the personal references in the Church minutes we appreciate the fact that after his entry into College his village friends invited him to take the Sunday services on several special occasions during his College course.

To-day he is filled with thanksgiving as he remembers those early impressions. "I am grateful beyond expression," he says, "to the village Church that reared me, commended my first sermon, and at length sent me to College with its benediction. In view of that experience I say to any young men with a conviction growing in them that they ought to give

hemselves to the ministry of the Word, 'Shrink not from the Free Church ministry. The post is onerous and responsible, but the work of preaching the Gospel of Jesus is blessed in degrees unspeakable and full of the Divine glory.'"

We are now parting company with Beeston and those early days. Anticipating events, therefore, let me quote from the *General Baptist Magazine* (1871) the obituary notice of his mother, which was written by the late Rev. Dr. Underwood:—

"Mrs. Clifford, after passing slowly through all the stages of consumption, peacefully expired March 8, 1871. Aged 56. She was a native of Sawley, Derbyshire, daughter of Mr. Stenson, who was for many years a useful member of the Baptist Church there, and sister to the Revs. Silas and Elam Stenson, the former of whom died at Retford in 1831. Mrs. Clifford was baptized when very young, and continued faithful to the Lord throughout her life. Removing to Beeston, she was transferred to the Church in that village. The loss of her husband in 1866 painfully affected her spirits and apparently injured her health. For the last fifteen months she was almost wholly confined to her house, but during her long affliction her mind was eminently serene. She was followed to her grave in the Beeston Chapel grounds by her sons and daughters and other relatives, the Rev. J. Clifford being chief mourner."

CHAPTER III

COLLEGE DAYS

JOHN CLIFFORD entered the Midland Baptist College, Leicester, Sept., 1855, in his nineteenth year. This institution belonged to the General Baptists—who were in considerable strength in the Midlands—and had as its principal the Rev. Joseph Wallis. He has been described to me by a former student as an amiable, charming old gentleman, of comfortable proportions and easy manners, but hardly possessing the qualities enabling him to secure a keen intellectual grip of his men, or to direct their thought into definite channels. When mental or spiritual difficulties assailed them, he wanted that note of authority and sympathetic insight to assist him in exorcising the doubt or query, or even to tolerate it. As a man he was exceedingly lovable, and gifted with much sound common sense. His first message to the young probationer is an admirable specimen of the careful, discreet, and brotherly “head.” There is a fine old-fashioned flavour about its sentences. Addressing him as

"my dear young friend," he advised him to cultivate spiritual habits, and to study ministerial propriety of demeanour and the habits of a gentleman. "As much as you can," he said, "preach extempore, or *rather* from the remembrance of previously-arranged trains of thought. . . . There is a strong prejudice against reading in the denomination."

When John Clifford entered College there were in residence Messrs. C. Burrows, now Congregational minister at Whitehaven; Edward Foster, who became Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. at Leicester and died early; John Page Hopps, the author of the well-known hymn, "We praise Thee, God, for hours of bliss," who began his ministry at Hugglescote, became an assistant to George Dawson, of Birmingham, and afterwards joined the Unitarians; John Orissa Goadby, who entered the mission field and died at his post; Wm. Shakespeare, who became a Unitarian minister; and Joseph Holroyd, who accepted the pastorate at Barton-in-the-Beans, and died in early life. Coming soon after were John Colebrook, who on account of his changed theological standpoint relinquished his studies and re-entered business, remaining to the present time one of John Clifford's most intimate friends; James Maden, ordained to the ministry at Macclesfield and subsequently ministering at Sheffield and Nottingham; and Thomas Reed Elliot, who joined the Unitarians, and is now in their ministry.

On the eve of his entry to College theological circles had been much disturbed by German "Neology" as it was termed. This phase of modern thought had practically divided the tutor from the students. The former considered there was nothing good in it, and proscribed it entirely. This attitude, a student recently told the writer, largely assisted to drive the men whose names have been already quoted, from orthodoxy into Unitarianism, and he thought that if the principal had shown more toleration and less of the hostility, dictated by conservatism, towards those who were attracted by the German views, the denomination might not have lost them. Coming straight from a country village into this atmosphere proved naturally a great trial of faith to John Clifford. Possessed of his mother's belief, nurtured on orthodoxy and quite outside the region of modern thought, one can imagine the crisis through which he passed. Practically speaking, it meant building up afresh his theological position. Speaking of this time, he told the writer that "he passed through a severe intellectual crucifixion, and had to struggle through almost unaided."

For an effective contrast one should turn to Dale's experience. When he was at College there was a danger of his drifting into heresy or scepticism. Just at this time John Angell James, of Carr's Lane, who even then took a great interest in the young student, heard the rumours concerning the latter's theological position, and invited him to dinner. "After dinner,"

says Dale, in recounting the incident, "he asked me to walk upstairs with him to his study. As soon as we sat down, he drew his chair to the front of the fire, and bringing his great face close to mine, he said, 'Mr. Dale, may I speak plainly to you?' 'As plainly as you like, sir,' was the reply. Then came out what he had heard and what he feared. I answered him very frankly, and, as he might have justly thought, somewhat presumptuously; but, instead of reminding me of my youth, and the crudeness of my intellectual condition, he talked with me as familiarly and freely about the points on which we differed as though he had been a lad of my own age; with far greater toleration, indeed, of what he thought my mistakes, than a lad of my own age would have manifested." Dale regretfully admits that Mr. James's counsels failed to influence him, but adds that from that time he gradually came to feel his power and venerated his goodness.

The revolt of the students at the Midland College was stimulated by the Rev. George Alexander Syme, of Nottingham, who strongly impressed Mr. T. W. Freckleton and Mr. T. R. Stevenson. Mr. Freckleton, who has now passed away, had left the college prior to John Clifford's entry, and had settled at Longton as a Baptist minister. He then held views considered unorthodox, and eventually left his Church and entered the Unitarian ministry. He was often at the College, and these visits were much appreciated by his former friends on

account of his magnetic personality and intellectual view-point. It may be imagined, therefore, that under the circumstances his views were eagerly discussed by the men who fraternised with him. He was a great admirer of the Rev. Orville Dewey, whose sermons had so great an influence here, as well as in his native country—America. Theodore Parker, Horace Bushnell, W. E. Channing, and Dr. Martineau—for even then the latter was becoming well known—were also among his spiritual teachers. But from a fellow-student who has recorded these impressions, I learn that John Clifford, whilst always appreciative of the sublime moral truths taught by the Unitarians, did not succumb to the strong personal influence of Mr. Freckleton, with whom he was always on friendly terms, nor either to that of Mr. Page Hopps. Still it may be premised that this “baptism” of modern thought prepared his mind for broader views of Biblical inspiration and kindred subjects which became pronounced in later life, and which also have aroused the antagonism of the extremely orthodox.

Apart from theological questions there were political associations at Leicester which largely assisted in moulding the student's views of life and of the ministerial position in relation thereto. He had, as we know, started from home with warm Chartist sympathies, and on reaching Leicester found himself in a very hot-bed of advanced Liberalism and even Republicanism. It was also the home of



DR. CLIFFORD, AGE 21.

Edward Miall and J. P. Mursell, the prince of preachers, who were then carrying on their Liberation propaganda. One of the young student's favourite books on social questions at this time was Ernest Jones's "Evenings with the People." The author was a barrister who had suffered imprisonment because of his advanced Chartist views. When one remembers John Clifford's upbringing, the poverty of the labourers in the Beeston district, and the utter absence of comfort in their daily life, it is not surprising that at Leicester his love for generous government and religious liberty was extended both in its length and breadth. Even in those days he stood for two great truths—the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

Soon after entering the Midland College he made it manifest that he had come there to work hard. Notwithstanding the paucity of his early education he had, largely by the aid of the "Popular Educator," mastered the rudiments of Latin, acquired a knowledge of French and of Geology, and was fairly well read before leaving Beeston. From the time that he decided to enter the ministry he sought every opportunity of self-improvement, under the advice of Mr. Pike, and was, therefore, in some cases in advance of the average student. Moreover, he possessed great philological aptitude, which was considerably developed in the acquisition of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French. It was no hardship for him to spend twelve hours a day in classes and preparation.

Though never strong physically, his wiry temperament usually kept him at work until he collapsed, and throughout his career, as we shall see later on, there have been occasional breakdowns. He took several prizes at the College, and he has one in his possession now which bears the following inscription: "To Mr. John Clifford, from his friend and tutor, W. R. Stevenson, a prize awarded for passing the best examination in Greek History, the Greek text of the Epistles to the Galatians, the Latin of Cicero's first oration against Cataline, and other branches of study, June 17, 1858."

Besides preaching on Sunday and working in and for class, he conducted a Bible-class for young people at Dover Street, Leicester, and attended Temperance and Band of Hope meetings.

Among the members of the Leicester Bible-class was a young man who has since become mayor of Leicester — an office which he has held on two occasions.

There is evidence of the mental culture John Clifford was exercising in the commonplace memoranda which he kept at this time, and in which he recorded his impressions of books and things. These were commenced in 1853, and were continued throughout his period at College. Though written for his own meditation and stimulus, and without the slightest suspicion that fifty years later some of the entries would see the light of day, I have ventured to reproduce one or two extracts as

illustrating the moral and spiritual tendencies which were already possessing him.

“ I. *Witnessing an Execution.*

“ 1. The necessity of a remedial law against capital punishment.

“ 2. How awful the scene—a soul going into eternity—a man sent (not called) to God.

“ 3. What a consternation would have been produced had some man shouted out, ‘ I will die for him.’ So men stood on the drop—Christ spoke—Justice stayed.

“ 4. How joyous would the people have been had a redemptive word been issued from the Queen.

“ 5. Hanging always a ruinous effect on the public morals—causes cursing and swearing.

“ II. *On Preaching.*

“ Let men, as regards their manner, act according to what may be termed their own enlightened idiosyncrasies. Let them seek to answer the calls given by their own nature and in that way they will best succeed. Urging to work suits some better than anything else, whilst others must be continually comforting.

“ III. ‘ *Man-fear.*’

“ Man-fear is one of the devil’s fishing-hooks, by which the dark fisherman has often caught me.

"IV. Mere Popularity.

"A real 'people's man' is one of the greatest fools. He is controlled by the opinions of others ; he must do as they do or he falls. May I never be such a man. Heaven save me from that mean and beggarly slavery !"

At College he played the part of the good-natured, impetuous, even boisterous student. The matron often gave the injunction, "Quiet ! Mr. Clifford !" With ready humour he appropriated this as a compliment by altering the punctuation and interpreting it as the "Quiet Mr. Clifford !" By this designation he was afterwards known. One letter written by him in those days has been lent me by a friend. As typical of his high spirits I here quote it :—

"Verily thou art a 'brick,' and from thy store thou hast sent bright, lustre-giving, life-creating ideas, that sun one's soul as soon as they shine on it and produce a cheerfulness of frame and a hilarity of spirit not too often enjoyed. I well remember the frame in which your last epistolary emanation found me, dull and fretful, sober and solemn, but its words were to me as drops of water to a thirsty soul, or sparks of fire to the frosted and ice-bound. . . . You will be glad to hear that we sent £5 to the matron as the Students' testimonial. Bravo !"

Two other incidents I may quote from the pen of a fellow-student. "I very distinctly remember," he

says, "how on one occasion he was the champion in 'a wrestling bout.' And that meant, not only that he knew his man, but it was a case of 'one down and another come on' until several of the fellows, one after another, sustained defeat at his hands. It was to us a matter of surprise and of some amusement, for he was by no means the strongest amongst us, and it was on one occasion only. It was the result, not of his superior strength, but of the 'go' that was in him."

"On another occasion, when I was spending part of a vacation with him and his friends, we took a boat on the Trent. Dr. Clifford had one oar, and I had the other; but we were not expert oarsmen, and Dr. Clifford lost stroke. The consequence was that we were 'rushed' by the stream under some willows which dipped into the water, and we were run under them at the expense of a wetting. It remained for me to guide the boat as best I could to the opposite bank. The stream was very swift, and we were in danger of being swept towards the rapids under Trent Bridge. Dr. Clifford got to the front of the boat with the chain in his hand, and when the boat struck land he leapt on to the bank and held tight. The tail end of the boat swished round in a moment, but she did not get loose. We all safely landed, and a more fervent 'Thank God!' never escaped my lips than on that occasion."

Mr. John Colebrook says that Mr. Clifford cultivated his powers as a speaker by talking in the open

air in his walks, or during excursions in the country. "If only those flowers and shrubs which had the privilege of hearing the addresses could report, what eloquence would now be saved from oblivion!" humorously adds Mr. Colebrook.

I have discovered in a letter written in March, 1858, to Mr. Colebrook, an incidental allusion to a Bible-class he conducted whilst he was a student at the village of New Batsford, attended by about thirty young men and women, and sometimes more.

From a home-made memoranda book—now fifty years old and much discoloured by its age—containing particulars of all the sermons John Clifford delivered on supply from 1853 until October, 1858, I am permitted to quote one or two interesting facts. The notes contain a record of nearly 450 sermons, the large majority of which were delivered during his College course. In this period there appears to have been scarcely a Sunday in which he did not occupy one of the General Baptist pulpits in the counties of Derby, Nottingham, or Leicester. This plan of allowing students in their first year to preach is distinctly contrary to the procedure of some Colleges. In this case it was prompted mainly by the exigencies of the situation. A large number of small Churches in the Midlands depended upon the ministry of the students, and when a man in his first year was a tolerable preacher he had to take his turn with the senior men.

On many occasions he preached in the open air—

there are several entries of his having done so at Leicester, and also of his having preached on the racecourse there on October 19, 1856. In the following year he supplied Market Harborough from June 28th until October 4th. On almost every Sunday he conducted two services in the chapel and one in the open air, and in addition preached at the week evening meeting. As a result of this visit the cause was considerably strengthened, and though he had another year to serve at College, he received a hearty invitation to the pastorate of the church. This, however, he declined on the suggestion of the College secretary. Appreciating later events, one rejoices that he decided to continue his course of study.

Though at this period the bulk of his work was on behalf of the Baptist Churches, there are evidences that his sympathies even then outran his denomination. There are entries of sermons preached for the Reformers, the Primitive Methodists, and the Congregationalists.

An examination of his texts shows a decided preference for passages from the New Testament, whilst he gave indication of his appreciation of the Pauline teaching, which has proved a marked feature of his preaching.

There is one other interesting fact concerning these early sermons. From 1855 until his settlement at Praed Street, he records the amount he received for his services as "supply." The amounts varied from 2s. 6d. to one guinea, but this last amount only

accrued on one occasion, when he preached three times at Longton Theatre. With some care he totals his receipts from preaching engagements, September 2, 1855, to June 15, 1856, as £7 19s. 8d., an average of 2s. 2½d. for 73 sermons. Altogether, from 1855 until October, 1858, he received £68 19s. 7d. He has recently confessed that the arrangement made at the Midland Baptist College for its men to accept these engagements proved very convenient, for in many cases it enabled them to buy books from which otherwise they must have been debarred. This was his own personal experience, and he says frankly that his library was considerably enriched in consequence. One of his own superlative pleasures at College was on Saturdays to race up to the old book-stall in Leicester market in the hope of arriving first and securing the bargains.

After the death of the Rev. J. Wallis, Dr. Underwood became President of the College, and with him was associated the Rev. W. R. Stevenson, M.A. Their accession to its control synchronised with the settlement of the College at Nottingham, which happened in John Clifford's third year. At this time he was senior student, and the men in College immediately below him were Charles Clark, who has become so well known as a lecturer and preacher, John Harrison, Joshua Finn, who died after a short term of service, and Thomas Bailey, who went as a missionary to Orissa, and was head of the College there until his decease in 1902.

CHAPTER IV

PASTORAL SETTLEMENT IN LONDON

THE large majority of London ministers in the front rank to-day served their apprenticeship in the country. Two of the most notable exceptions are Dr. Horton, who came to Hampstead direct from Oxford, over twenty years ago, and commenced his ministry in an iron room ; and Dr. Clifford, who was invited to Praed Street, Paddington, nearly forty-six years since. In the whole Metropolis it would be difficult to find a well-known pastor who has successfully remained at one church for a longer period than he has done.

Before he left the Midland College two courses were open to him. He might have accepted the pastorate at Market Harborough, as already mentioned, or entered for the Dr. Williams' scholarship with a view of proceeding to Glasgow for his degree. Prior to visiting Praed Street in the summer of 1858 he had decided upon the second policy. As far as I can gather there was no serious thought on either side—at any rate, none on his own part—to consider

the invitation, even though the Church was without a pastor, as anything more than a vacation engagement, which had come his way primarily because an old friend, Mr. John Colebrook, who had entered College from Praed Street, and was still associated with it, had introduced his name.

The date of his first service in London was July 18, 1858. He supplied on the two following Sundays, and also conducted the Wednesday evening services. One who was present informs me that the Church immediately appreciated the young preacher, and before the engagement terminated determined to invite him to become its minister. He immediately laid the matter before the College tutors, and only when he received their approval did he abandon the intention of finishing his training at Glasgow and accept the pastorate at Praed Street. Then it was, however, with the stipulation that the Church should set him free to pursue his studies so that he might enter for degrees at the London University.

His letters at the time fully explain his position and also illustrate the spirit in which he had decided to settle at Praed Street. Writing to Mr. Brown, the Church secretary, he said :—

“After prolonged consideration, devout prayer and humble trust in God, I have resolved to come in the strength of the Lord God and commence my pastorate over the Church at Praed Street on the

third Lord's day in October—the 17th of the month. I do trust and fully believe that this step is ordered by the Lord, and therefore I walk in it. I pray that the great Jehovah may consecrate our union and make it abundantly productive of good to men and glory to Himself.

“I need not say make my coming known, so that the members of the Church may all be very earnest in prayer to God for His blessing to rest upon me.

“May the God of heaven bless the Church and you and your family.

“I am yours, in the love and faith of the Gospel,

“JOHN CLIFFORD.”

Mr. E. Brown, the Church secretary, replied as follows:—

“Your very welcome letter has inspired me with joy and gratitude. I believe all our friends will unite with me in these sentiments, and I trust also will publicly and privately implore His blessing who, when Paul planted and Apollos watered, gave the increase. The more I look into the causes which have led to your coming, the more convinced I am that the hand of God is in it. We had arranged to ask you to pay us a visit on the very day you have selected for our anniversary services. With how much more pleasure shall we receive you to abide with us.”

A letter written by Mr. Brown one month previously may also be quoted. He then said:—

"According to promise, we have called the Church together and fully explained to them the conditions you name in reference to the classes at the London University. The result is a *unanimous invitation*."

His tutor, the Rev. W. R. Stevenson, as we see by the letter below, did not advise an immediate settlement at Praed Street. He hoped that his student friend might have another year for training. Though the latter did not accept the counsel in its entirety, he profited by the suggestions concerning his degree at London University. In this respect tutor and pupil were in hearty agreement. Mr. Stevenson discussed the matter as follows:—

"I duly received both your note in answer to mine and also your epistle of yesterday's date. From neither of them, however, can I clearly gather whether it is the wish of the friends at Praed Street that you should go there at once, or whether they are willing to wait twelve months for you.

"If the *former*, I should most decidedly advise you to say 'No.' If, on the other hand, they are willing to wait until the middle of next July, whilst I should scarcely like, without a further knowledge of circumstances, to counsel your acceptance of the call, I certainly cannot advise a hasty rejection of it.

"Providing they are willing to wait, and you are inclined to accept, I should advise you to make up your mind to matriculate next July. With patient application during the coming session you may do it, and the thing will then be off your mind.

"I should then say, in October, 1859, join *two* of the classes in the University College, which will cost you about £15 per annum, and attend two classes a year for *three* successive years. You may then, if all be well, take your B.A. degree, and, I think, do it with ease and credit.

"But if you enter on a London pastorate before matriculation, my opinion is the whole thing will drop through. This I should regret; not that I deem the mere having or not having a *degree* an important matter; but if you can matriculate before entering on your ministry it will be a stimulus to you to go on with your studies and keep to them for a series of years to come. And to be candid, I think that yours is a mind which both *needs* and will pay for a thorough cultivation. When you remember that all we have is given to us by our Creator, to be employed in His service, it will not, I trust, tend to make you vain when I say that, in my opinion, God has endowed you with considerable ability for the acquisition of knowledge, and has bestowed upon you powers which, with a large and liberal culture, may enable you one day to render good service in connection with the cause of Christ. On the other hand, without this extensive culture I believe that you will be more than usually prone to fall into the errors of half-educated persons. On both these grounds, then, I am very anxious that you should have as complete and thorough a training as possible. Perhaps the thought may occur to you, that if you

were to settle at Praed Street, say at Christmas, you might still matriculate in July. But the number and variety of things you will have to get up seem to me to render it unadvisable. Besides additional reading in Latin and Greek, you will have to study either French or German, so as to be able to translate at sight a passage into English ; you will have to renew and considerably extend your acquaintance with Roman and English history ; you will have to master the principles of arithmetic and the elements of algebra ; to obtain a popular knowledge of natural philosophy and chemistry, and to make yourself familiar with Latham's erudite and ponderous work on the English language. Besides this, the study of some book on the history of English literature will be desirable. Now you cannot, I think, do all this well between now and next midsummer, and at the same time meet properly the weekly and daily demands of a pastorate.

"With respect to the anxiety of the Praed Street friends for a speedy reply, I may add that if you incline to accept their call, you must wait until the meeting of the committee at the end of October.

"Trusting that you will make this subject a matter of earnest prayer, and fully believing that in answer to that you will be guided to the right decision,

"I am, my dear young friend,

"Yours sincerely and affectionately,

"WM. R. STEVENSON."

The Rev. Jas. Goadby, the College secretary, also wrote the young pastor, shortly after his settlement, an encouraging letter from the College committee. "The committee," he said, "were very thankful to hear of your promising prospects at Paddington, and also gratified with the hope that your labours would be so lightened as to enable you to prosecute your studies at University College. They very cordially sanctioned the advice given as to your removal, and most cordially wish you every blessing. . . . Praying that your health may be preserved and that you may be a very useful and honoured minister of the Gospel of Christ, I am, yours truly, JAS. GOADBY."

Immediately he accepted the call to Praed Street he communicated his decision to Mr. John Colebrook in the following letter, and its perusal will enable the reader to understand, even better than his less intimate communication to Mr. Brown, the high endeavour with which he applied himself to the task:—

"I have decided to accept the invitation to Praed Street. The question now remaining to be settled is one of time. I know not in which way to decide for the best. I think it is very probable that I shall come before long; and I do trust that if I come I shall be enabled to do a great deal of good to men, to advance the spiritual life and usefulness of those with whom I may associate.

"It will be a matter of great regret to me to leave the College, my love for the study is so intense.

Never do I feel happier than in the study, except it be in the pulpit. This little room in which I write has, to use Foster's phrase, verily *grown warm* to me. I do enjoy it, and to leave it will be a great source of regret, and nothing but a conviction of duty or sheer necessity would get me out of it.

"To look on into the future sometimes gives me joy, sometimes sorrow. I feel in looking to the act of becoming pastor as though that was to be the beginning of my real life. The past seems as a play-hour compared with that. There is something so tremendously responsible in the privilege of exerting so vast an influence over the minds and lives of people, as I shall necessarily do, from the nature of the position I shall hold, such a responsibility as makes me ask whether I am sufficient for these things, and yet I hear that good old line, '*Trust in God and do the right*,' and its tendency is to expel all fear from my mind, and to fill me with a strong resolution to do my best in the manfullest and godliest way I can, and leave the rest with our heavenly Father.

"It is supremely necessary in the adoption of a change of life that we thoroughly understand the nature and probable results of the change we make in regard to the lifelong influence of our actions. I consider myself responsible to God for the *whole* influence I exert—the *sum*—and if I can do anything by which that *sum* will be increased, if I can secure an augmentation of that sum, then I feel I ought at



Photo. Lowe, St. John's Wood.

DR. CLIFFORD, AGE 24.

once to begin the work, and if a change is needed, to make it, however much it may appear to go against the influence which I am at present exerting ; or even if *no change* is necessary, then, however inviting that change is, still—avoid it—make it not—if the making of it will decrease from that great sum of good influence which I ought and might exert.

“My idea is that by a change of the sort intended I should considerably increase my influence for good, and therefore I am prepared to make it, hoping that my ideas will receive confirmation from the everyday facts of my future history.

“We are all in full work again at the College. I am doing those things which would considerably prepare me for matriculation at the London University. Taylor is well. We have three fresh ones, a *nice*, good, intelligent young man from London. He was a grocer previously. His name, Clark, from Borough Road. I told you about the others. I am going to have a *Baptism* at Ripley on Sunday. So I expect rather a peculiar and pleasing day.”

The little church, situated in a dingy street, did not offer a particularly inviting prospect to the new pastor. It was in low water, apparently there were few opportunities of substantial extension, and it could only afford to pay him £100 per year. The building had fallen into a bad state of repair, and presented a most uninviting appearance. Quadrangular and with heavy galleries, the facetious designated it the “consecrated sawpit.” It seated five hundred persons,

but for many years this number of worshippers had not come within its walls.

The history of Praed Street far surpassed its prosperity in 1858. This record is largely associated with Alice Ludford, a true-hearted Leicestershire Baptist, who was converted in her eighteenth year. Leaving the country, she settled in London and came to Paddington. Here I quote from Dr. Clifford :—

“ Her first efforts were directed to the discovery of her ‘ own people.’ No course could have been purer or safer. Seek your ‘ own people ’ ! But if they are not at hand, then do as Mrs. Ludford did. The nearest General Baptist church being at Whitechapel, she united with the Wesleyans and devoted herself to Christian work in connection with their organisations. It was as she was visiting the sick one Sunday afternoon, with her alert eye, open heart, and ready will a new vocation came. In an underground kitchen she found a young man and his wife from Norwich, suffering from poverty and the husband prostrated by disease. Conversing with him, she discovered that he was a General Baptist and an occasional preacher. The need and the opportunity combined, and she said, ‘ By God’s help we’ll get you out of this place, and if you can preach, when you get better you shall.’ Her spirit and character are well displayed in the account she herself gives of this incident—‘ He was nearly starved to death ; neither he nor his wife had any thing on but filthy rags. I immediately betook

myself to my old weapon, prayer, and begged my dear Lord to spare the man, and that after so many unhappy years he would bless my soul with a Church of his own institution in Paddington, which would stand for ever to shake the devil's kingdom. I felt sure my prayer would be answered, but at that time I could not see how such a thing could be done—for I myself was only poor.'

"Health came to the invalid, and with the 'noble venturesomeness' born of the 'faith' that conquers life's difficulties, Mrs. Ludford furnished a back room for him to live in, and went in quest of forms and pulpit for the front room for him to preach in. These rooms were in Praed Street. The whole cost this self-sacrificing woman met herself, and being two pounds short, pledged her best cloak to that amount. Henry Ward Beecher was his own chapel-keeper in his first charge in Indiana. Mrs. Ludford created her chapel-keeper out of the man who assisted her in her business, and that he might be robed as became the post, begged for him a pair of shoes and clad him in a new coat at her own cost. And now armed with a preacher and a candle-snuffer, what more could she need? Only an audience. In September, 1827, the place was opened with a congregation made up of the preacher and his wife, Mrs. Ludford and her 'deacon,' Mrs. Ludford's sister and a few children. 'For some time no one came'—and so we gave it up? No! She was not made of that metal! 'No one came, but we kept on preaching and pray-

ing,' and He who listened to the cry of Hannah, and rejoiced in the alabaster box of Mary, He came and sustained the faith of our heroine. 'Being in need, they announced,' says Dr. Underwood, 'one Sunday a collection for the minister, and lo! one visitor put 10s. in the plate. It was the gift of her son-in-law, referring to whose visit Mrs. Ludford said in her forcible Saxon—'I shall never forget the flurry I was in when I saw Mr. Wileman come;' and then she adds this significant and character-revealing statement: 'All the while the preacher was at his work I kept praying that the Lord would touch his heart and make him one of us.' The Lord heard and answered that prayer, and his accession to the little flock was like an addition of Paul to the persecuted and troubled company at Jerusalem.

"The next day he came down and said, 'Whose seats are those in that room?' and I said, 'Mine, but I owe £2 on them.' He gave me the money, and the cloak was fetched back again to its home.

"Meanwhile she had united herself to the Church at Commercial Road, then under the care of Rev. Joseph Wallis, and on the removal of the preacher to Norwich, friends came over from the Church to preach, Sunday by Sunday, the unsearchable riches of Christ. Prosperity attended the faithful toil. The Praed Street room was too small; larger premises were secured in the South Wharf Road. This was soon too small, and the lease of a piece of ground in Church Street, Edgware Road, was

taken in 1831, and a building erected thereon for £1,700, capable of seating five hundred persons. It was opened and dedicated for worship December 27th, 1831. The Church was formed at the beginning of 1832, by transfer from Commercial Road.

“The spirit of this grand venture finds no better expression than in the words written by Mrs. Ludford at the bottom of her own account of the origin of our Church in this western part of London — ‘Now who will despise the day of small things!’

“The first pastor of the Church was Rev. James Ferneyhough. In 1835 the Marylebone Society figures in the ominous list of ‘non-vocal’ churches at the end of the Year Book, and subsequent reports make manifest that a *fissiparous* process has been at work, which in 1837 reveals the fact that Jabez Burns is pastor of one hundred and twenty-five members at Church Street, and J. Ferneyhough is the minister to eighty-six members at Edward Street, Dorset Square. A worse place for an aggressive society than Edward Street could scarcely be found. The report of 1838 has only one healthy sign, and that is a complaint against the secluded situation of the chapel. The following year matters are worse, much worse. The air is electric, finances are straitened. No additions except of troubles and perplexities, and so with great wisdom they lapsed again into nearly total speechlessness. To the feeble flock oppressed with manifold cares at Edward Street, Moses came in the person of Mr. Henry

Wileman. The half-sovereign he put in the plate in the front room at Praed Street was only an 'earnest' of many good things to flow from his generous heart. Without him the ground in Church Street had never been bought—nor the edifice reared. It was he, along with Mr. Joseph Morgan, who secured the services of Dr. Burns to London, and now it was his privilege, on the behalf of Christ, to lead the little flock at Edward Street out of their *cul de sac* into the ampler pastures of Praed Street Tabernacle. That structure was built in 1816, for a congregation of Independents, with a strongly Calvinistic bias, Mr. T. Orchard being their pastor. But in 1841 the building was for sale. Mr. H. Wileman secured it, and the Edward Street community, reinforced by forty-five members from Church Street Chapel, formed a membership of one hundred and twenty-nine and together took possession of Praed Street Chapel, March 14, 1841."

Amongst the men who welcomed Dr. Clifford to Praed Street were Joseph Morgan, whom he describes as "true as steel, tender as a mother"; Edward Brown, the secretary, "quiet, genial, poetry-loving," and Thomas Poynton Dexter. Concerning the latter he said, "He was one of the three deacons when I accepted the pastorate, and he soon became a cherished friend, a helpful companion, and a welcome comrade. His letters to me concerning the accept-

ance of the office of leader of a sorely enfeebled Christian society I have read again with great pleasure"—this was in 1887—"so full are they of wise counsel, true sympathy, and brave hope. They were a strong force in lifting me out of the College into the pastorate." On Saturday afternoons in those early days of pastoral settlement the young pastor and the deacon used to read the Latin classics together and debate questions of literature, philosophy, and politics.

CHAPTER V

STUDIES AT THE LONDON UNIVERSITY CLASSES

JOHAN CLIFFORD lost no time in settling down to his prescribed course of extra studies. With a concentration which has always been a distinguishing characteristic he applied himself to the matriculation. In this respect he completely falsified his tutor's fears, for in the year following his commencement at Praed Street he matriculated in the first division. To enable readers to appreciate the chronological order of his scholastic successes, the following dates may serve a useful purpose :—

- 1858. Settled at Praed Street.
- 1859. Matriculated first Division London University.
- 1861. Graduated B.A.
- 1862. Graduated B.Sc., honours in Logic, Moral Philosophy, Geology, and Palæontology.
- 1864. Graduated M.A., first in his year.
- 1866. Graduated LL.B., honours in Principles of Legislation.
- 1879. Elected Fellow of Geological Society.
- 1883. Bates' University, U.S., conferred honorary D.D.

The mere chronicling of these honours, which

meant the addition of M.A., B.Sc., LL.B., to his name, occupies little space, and to some people may convey but an inadequate impression of their significance. Readers, however, do not require any reminder that London University is not excelled for the stiffness of its examinations by any University in the world. By common knowledge it gives points to Oxford and Cambridge. Therefore, that he should have passed with such high distinction affords a sufficient commentary upon the assiduity, ability, and wholeheartedness of his work during those long years.

How easy to have relinquished the struggle and settled down into a humdrum minister's life, attending methodically to the duties of his calling, earning his modest salary, and in a limited sphere achieving his reward! There were also domestic ties which he contracted in 1862, to which we refer later on, that might have proved an obstacle. To many men under similar circumstances marriage has barred all educational ambition. In his case it proved a help rather than a hindrance, and to-day the note-books in his wife's handwriting are evidence of her loving co-operation in his studies. He has a score or more of these stored away in his library. Like many other successful students, he made voluminous notes of the lectures and also of the books he mastered. "I always read with a pen by my side," he explains, and one appreciates the wisdom of this plan in glancing through

the careful notes on Blackstone prepared for his LL.B. To-day he can as easily refer to these as to Smith's "Leading Cases," Mackenzie's Roman Law, the Law of Evidence, or Public Meeting Law.

Owing to "want of pence"—"which has pursued me throughout life," he adds good-humouredly—he could not purchase the necessary books to enable him to study at home. Therefore he took advantage of the British Museum Library, and without these facilities it would have proved impossible for him to obtain his degrees. His usual plan was to walk from Paddington to the British Museum so that he could arrive there directly the doors opened. With the exception of a slight interval for lunch, which he obtained at a coffee-house close at hand, he would remain at the Museum until five o'clock, and then walk back to Paddington. This was the programme for several days of every week when he was not actually attending the classes. At these times many of his sermons were hammered out in the Museum Library—that paradise of the poor student.

Though he had bargained with the Church for freedom to pursue his studies, I do not find that he neglected its interests. Its prosperity, described in a later chapter, is sufficient proof of this fact. But he rigidly shut himself off from public work, in itself a self-denying ordinance to a man of his temperament and qualifications. He had his reward not only in the honours, however, but also in the prizes he won in his classes. For instance, in

that of Political Economy he wrested a prize from Sir Edward Busk, now one of the Commissioners of the London University, and with whom he was bracketed equal in the first position for the M.A. in 1864. He also took prizes in the classes of Professors Masson, Hoppus, and Potter.

Amongst the professors under whose tuition he came were Professors David Masson, Williamson, Potter, Hoppus, and De Morgan. The first assisted to form his judgment on the laws that should govern the right appreciation of literature. It is interesting to know that Professor Masson, the great authority on Milton, who was Professor of English Literature at Gower Street from 1853 to 1865, and now an octogenarian in retirement at Hampstead, distinctly remembers his eager pupil, and has confessed to a mutual friend the pleasure with which he has watched his career. Professor Williamson gave the lectures on Chemistry, which was then an obligatory subject. Professor Potter taught Natural Philosophy; Professor Hoppus, Mental and Moral Philosophy; whilst under Professor De Morgan he studied Mathematics.

Dr. Clifford speaks in warm terms of Augustus De Morgan, who was then one of the first mathematicians in Europe. A biographer says of him, and in reference to his contemporaries: "In power of exposition, the incessant prosecution of his aim, philosophical grasp, profound historical erudition, and a memory of the richest associations and the

greatest retentiveness, he remained the expositor and educator *par excellence* of them all. His works surpass to-day, in their stimulating and seductive qualities, anything of the kind written in English. From his Elements of Arithmetic to his abstrusest contributions to Logic, they all bear the stamp of creative life, and unfailingly enlist the reader to a full share of that rarest of pleasures, creative enjoyment. Had not De Morgan's lot been cast in an era which, in his country at least, was essentially one of fundamental reform, he would have been undoubtedly, more than he was, 'one of the greatest mathematicians of the nineteenth century.'

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"De Morgan's religious views are an anomaly. Theological 'Paradoxes' were his delight, and he rapped their pates unmercifully whenever reason and the 'religion of science' required it. Bred with appalling doctrinal strictness, which made Sunday the wretchedest day of the week, he was mentally and spiritually unable in after-life to listen for any time to speaking or preaching. The old troubles of the three services on Sunday and the 'dreary sermons' came back to him. He twice resigned his professorship at University College, London, with which the activity of his life was identified—the last time, not for the suppression of unorthodox, but for that of orthodox opinion. He was as jealous of orthodox freedom of expression as of unorthodox, as

malicious in the castigation of false atheistic as false theistic logic. If he did not openly avow the religious convictions of his heart, it was for reasons which find their psychological explanations in the fundamental trait of his character. In his last will and testament he says: 'I commend my future with hope and confidence to Almighty God; to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom I believe in my heart to be the Son of God, but whom I have not confessed with my lips, because in my time such confession has always been the way up in the world!'"

One can readily understand that such a powerful personality deeply affected his admiring student.

Amongst the young minister's friends at Gower Street with whom he collaborated were Mr. Benjamin Kisch, Canon Rayner Winterbotham, of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, who still maintains correspondence with him, and Principal T. C. Edwards, who has now passed away, but is remembered for his *Commentary on the Hebrews*. Judge Bompas and Professor Stanley Jevons were also at University College during the same period.

For the encouragement of younger men I have asked Dr. Clifford what was the controlling impulse which induced this prolonged but voluntary study—extending over the first eleven years of his ministry. "In Beeston," he replied, "there lived an old man named Hutchinson, who was full of sound common sense, and whose sayings even now—after a lapse of fifty years—come back to me with ever recurring

freshness. One thing he used to say was this : 'If you become a student for the ministry you ought not to consider what you can do now, but what you will have to do when you are fifty years old.' This remark, often repeated during my youth in the village, determined me to prepare for a lengthened training. Then there was my mother's influence, and this was always on the same lines. She especially desired that I should be thoroughly equipped for the ministerial office. Her advice was, 'Look ahead !' "

As previously noted in his letter to Mr. Colebrook conveying his decision to accept the call to Praed Street, he took large views of his responsibilities as a Christian minister. These, as we know, are characteristic of his whole life. John Morley, speaking of Gladstone, says, "He strove to use all the powers of his own genius, and the powers of the State for moral purposes and religious." Paraphrasing this quotation, we say that John Clifford has striven to use the whole of his powers to the extension of the "high vocation" which he entered. He studied law because he believed that the principles of legislation so directly applied to social and political life that a knowledge of them was necessary to enable him adequately to deal with the problems relating to the working classes. A scientific training he considered absolutely essential in view of the conflict he foresaw between theologians and scientists.

This was an accurate forecast in view of the heavy

onslaughts afterwards made by science upon the battlements of Christianity. Forewarned is forearmed. When the ordinary minister, fearful of science dreaded its conclusions, he was able to reconcile the operations of both theology and science, and with equanimity face the researches of the scientist. "It was for the preacher," he has said, "to mediate the supernatural truth so that it should be possible for men to keep their views of the universe and its evolution, and yet at the same time accept and enjoy the revelation which God gives of Himself in Jesus Christ. This task was not unbiblical. It was what John did in regard to the doctrine of the Logos. The preacher had not to stand up in the pulpit and denounce evolution and fight all the men of science. That was the worst thing any man could engage in. Science and religion must become one ultimately, and the most auspicious sign of the times was that the men of science were confessing their inability to give a complete and adequate interpretation of the whole human life from the point of view of science."

For some time he attended classes at the School of Mines under the tuition of Professor Ramsay, head of the Geological Survey, and of Professor Etheridge, who directed the studies in Palæontology and Palæobotany.

In his day the Senate of London University did not possess, as now, the privilege of conferring degrees of B.D. and D.D. If this had been possible then, in all probability he would have entered for the latter dis-

tion, and thus made unnecessary the conferring of an honorary American degree, which was spontaneously bestowed by Bates' College in 1883. Since the public-spirited action of the *Christian World* such honours have naturally aroused suspicion, unless emanating from Yale, Harvard, or Chicago, but twenty years ago bogus American degrees were not so plentiful or spurious scholarship so misleading. Otherwise one is assured that John Clifford would not for a single moment have accepted it. He would rather have retained the title of "Doctor," which, in humorous mood, but still with genuine admiration, the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, the President of the Pastor's College, had *viva voce* conferred upon him on more than one occasion!

Some of his sectarian opponents have taken advantage of the recent Educational controversy to attempt to discredit him for holding a degree from Bates' College. Two or three of the Tory dailies—evidently jealous of his unique influence in the present campaign—have adopted discreditable tactics in order to disparage him. But these critics forget that if he had belonged to the Anglican Church his high distinctions already gained would have procured a doctorate at either Oxford or Cambridge. It is but another instance of the manner in which a privileged Church treats England's deserving sons outside its pale.

Moreover, it should be remembered (1) that John Clifford was asked twice whether he would accept a

degree from an American University, and each time he wrote declining the honour ; (2) that Bates' College conferred the degree without asking, and that whilst Dr. Clifford *privately* acknowledged the kindness which prompted this Free Baptist (or General Baptist) College to offer the diploma, he did not make the act of the College known in England ; and (3) that it became known in England first of all by the editor of the *Sunday School Chronicle* of that time publishing the fact from an American paper.

But Bates' College is a thoroughly respectable and genuine institution. It does not carry on merchandise in degrees, and only confers one or two honorary distinctions in a year. One must admit that it will not rank with the three American Universities previously named, and that it is small and, comparatively speaking, unknown in England. Yet it possesses a properly organised teaching staff, divinity school, and well-equipped premises. Its graduates, too, are professors at Yale and Harvard. Moreover, it is definitely associated with the Baptist Churches in Lewiston, Maine, and district. It grew out of the Maine State Seminary, which was chartered in 1855, and received its name in acknowledgment of the generosity of Mr. Benjamin Bates, who gave 100,000 dollars towards its development. Since his death, amounts equalling this sum have been received from other benefactors. The college is unsectarian in aims and methods, but "unequivocally Christian." A large percentage of the

students are actively religious, and represent nearly all the denominations of New England. From the time of its organisation, in 1863, it has received young women on the same terms with young men, and thus commenced on the Atlantic sea-board the higher education of the sex. The College provides a thorough course of instruction in all its departments, which are completely up-to-date.

In connection with the College there are ten State Scholarships, endowed by a donation of one thousand dollars each, which are in the hands of the Governor, and in addition 49 other scholarships of various amounts. The latest report gives 59 students in the senior class, 67 in the junior class, 75 in the Sophomore class, 92 in the Freshman's—making a total of 293.

The Cobb Divinity school is a department of Bates' College, under the control and supervision of one of its committees, and recognised as a Free Baptist institution, though open to students of every denomination. Its Baptist associations are apparent by the fact that the various Baptist Churches in the district have furnished the rooms for the Divinity students. The library numbers four thousand volumes, devoted to theological subjects, whilst in addition the men have access to the College library of general literature, which totals twenty thousand volumes. There are at present eighteen students in residence being educated for the ministry.

CHAPTER VI

FORTY-FIVE YEARS' MINISTRY IN THE METROPOLIS

ON one occasion Dr. Clifford was asked why he succeeded at Praed Street, and replied, "I could eat periwinkles with a pin!" "Which is an allegory." The interpretation lies in the fact that he visited the homes of the humbler members of his congregation, shared their joys and sorrows, and solaced them with hope and faith. These visitations almost cost his life in 1862. He was infected with diphtheria from one of his sick members, and a long and serious illness intervened, which only just escaped a fatal ending.

But there is a deeper truth to be revealed concerning his success. He came to Praed Street with the vivid remembrance of his mother's prayers. These have had a direct and unmistakable influence upon the whole of his ministry. He appreciates the saying of Alfred the Great, "We need war men, and we need work men, but most of all do we need prayer men." From the notes of an address he gave on the fifth anniversary of his settlement, I see that he emphasised

the questions, "Have you prayed for your pastor and for the Word he preaches, that it may have free course and be glorified? Have you prayed for your fellow-members that they may be brought to know the love of God?" Since then he has recounted many instances of the answers to prayer which came in his own experience and in that of the members. Let me quote two.

"A woman, the wife of a blacksmith, was led by the gospel of Christ into the joy of salvation," he says. "Her experience of the grace of God in Christ was vivid and full. She knew little of doubt concerning herself, but she was full of solicitude for her husband and children; for she had a very heavy burden to carry, and her heart was sore stricken. Her husband was a drunkard. When sober he was true, devoted, and loving; but when he fell into intemperance he became hard, harsh, and even violent. But never did the brave and trustful wife cease to hope or cease to pray. In the darkest hours she begged for the conversion of her husband, and felt sure that God would respond to her supplications. That was her habitual mood, her supreme desire, her living prayer; and I could see that this very disposition developed her saintliness, deepened her affection for her husband, and gave increased beauty to her family life, as well as added to her usefulness in the Church.

"One day, in the course of my pastoral visits, I called at the blacksmith's home. Scarcely was the

threshold crossed when the husband rushed in, wild, angry, and violent, the prey of intoxicants. But before he had proceeded far the wife approached him, flung her arms around him, called him by name and said, 'Ah, God will give you to me yet.' St. Ambrose told Monica, when she went to him, sad and desponding about her son, 'God would not forget the prayers of such a mother,' and Augustine came, though late in his young manhood, into the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. So I felt the earnest pleadings of this true wife and mother would not be forgotten of God, but that according to her own beautiful saying, God would 'give her husband to her;' for she did not think he was completely hers whilst he was under the dominion of intoxicants—give him to her freed from that depraving and desolating slavery. And it was so. For he, too, became a Christian, and they together effectively served their generation according to the will of God, 'turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.'

"There recurs to me the image of a visitor who called one Sunday evening, in 1862, and who wished to know what he was to do in order to control and suppress an ungovernable temper. For years it had tortured him past all bearing, and what was worse, for years it had been a source of pain and discomfort in his home. When his anger was kindled he was, by his own confession, a terror to wife and to children, and, seeing that he had recently become a Christian,

he felt acutely the stain such actions fixed on garments that should have been unspotted by the world. 'What must I do? I can't go on in this way, and yet though I feel it is wrong I can't help myself.'

"The first suggestion I ventured was based on the regard he had expressed for his pastor. 'What would be the effect,' said I, 'on you, if I were to appear at the moment the storm was about to burst? Think!'

"He thought, and then said, 'It wouldn't burst. I should stop it.'

"'Well, then, try this plan. Force yourself at the moment of peril into the conscious presence of God, and say, as you feel the uprising passion, "O God, make me master of myself." Pray that prayer; and pray, morning by morning, that you may so pray in your time of need; and in due season you will obtain the perfect mastery of yourself you seek.' He promised. I watched. He prayed. He conquered; once, twice, thrice, and then failed; but he renewed the attempt, and triumphed again, and years afterwards I knew him as one of the most serene of men; and when he died, no phase of his character stood out more distinctively than his perfect self-control, and no fact in his life was remembered with deeper gratitude by his bereaved wife than that memorable victory won by prayer in the early days of his discipleship to the Lord Jesus."

Reverting to Praed Street, the first baptism at the little church took place on December 26, 1858, when there was an addition of twenty-six to the "feeble folk" who had previously watched the cause decline. This accession of numbers emphasised the appreciation which the coming of the young pastor had evoked. Amongst those baptized were Mr. J. Wallis Chapman, who afterwards became secretary of the diaconate and the architect of Westbourne Park Chapel. Others of that little company have passed away, but there are still five or six members living in Paddington bearing fragrant memories of those far distant days in Praed Street. At the close of his first year seventy-three were added to the Church, and in the second eighty-one. In eighteen years the membership had risen from sixty to five hundred and seventy-four. From that time onwards annual and gradual increases have testified to the zeal of pastor and people, until to-day there are in active association over a thousand members.

Whilst referring to Church statistics I must here quote Dr. Clifford's strict rule in submitting these to the London Baptist Association. "First it has been a rule with us always to have what we call an 'irregular list,'" he says, "consisting of the names of persons who have left us, but who are unable to obtain a transfer to another Church. At the present time, in connection with our Church in Praed Street, Westbourne Park, and Bosworth Road, we have nearly one hundred on this list. Some are on the

sea, some are travelling ; some have been away for a few months, but are not sure that they will not return, and therefore object to being transferred to another Church ; some have occupations which take them into different parts of the country whilst retaining their homes in London. Now all these are kept on the Church lists, and are corresponded with occasionally. Some of them send gifts to Church work, and afford other evidences of their unabated interest in the Church to which they belong. *But they are never returned in the list of our members to the Association !* Indeed, since there is always a certain number of members in a transition state—*i.e.*, passing, or about to pass, into the 'irregular list'—we have for twenty years, besides omitting those on the 'irregular list,' returned less than our reportable 'regular' strength, so that we might not, even by two or three per cent., exaggerate our actual available membership. This has seemed to me the only way to be strictly *true*, to prevent signs of 'wholesale erasure' in the figures returned to the Association, and avoid that, to me, frightful possibility, of my successor discovering that I had left him only a 'bogus' Church."

Three years after he settled at Praed Street the congregations were sufficiently large, and the agencies so much increased, that it became necessary to consider the question of extended premises. Difficulties, however, confronted them on every hand. Property could not be bought either on the right or left of the

chapel, and the building was already too long to admit of its being lengthened again. "We were obliged to look for other quarters," says Dr. Clifford. "At that time it was felt that the new site must be close at hand ; but, dwelling in a crowded neighbourhood, we found it absolutely impossible to obtain a plot of ground sufficiently near on which to erect a larger house for God." This proved a time of much anxiety for pastor and people, who were undecided as to the policy to be adopted. There were some who favoured a site upon or near Paddington Green, but the ground belonged to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and they refused to sell. Again, Westbourne Park was considered by an important minority too far away from the centre of population. But events have amply proved the wisdom of that choice.

The forward work of Dr. Clifford's Church has generally proved heroic and self-sacrificing—like himself. In 1870 two houses in Westbourne Park Place, now Porchester Road, Bayswater, one mile from Praed Street, were purchased for £2,560, and the Church eventually decided to build an additional chapel instead of merely substituting a larger building. At the same time, the old home was enlarged to its utmost limits, and by this means eighty new seats were added to the accommodation, its interior was made more attractive, and the schoolroom was also somewhat modernised and improved. These renovations cost £1,000.

The difficulties contingent upon developing the site at Westbourne Park still faced the congregation. When the proposal of building a church with the prospect of a heavy debt came before the Church officers, some of them felt disheartened. At that time the large drapery and other business establishments in Bayswater had not attained such proportions as to-day, and after all the Church could not boast wealthy and affluent members. Still, the task did not appal the pastor, and Mr. Cayford, Mr. Towers, and Mr. Lilley, three of the Church officers, were quite ready to share the responsibility.

The Doctor's part in the new scheme naturally proved onerous. Though his work was more than doubled, he would not take an increased stipend until the whole of the debt was removed. His appeal for funds, issued at the beginning of 1873, affords some indication of the buoyant spirit with which he met this heavy work. "Now what will you do, my beloved friends?" he wrote. "You have worked well and nobly, with great patience and self-denial, and I trust you still. Some friends have already given for the current year, others are giving weekly or quarterly, and others have promised for the 29th of next month. But in a work like this it is necessary and fitting that every one should do something. I know you love me. I have manifold and increasing proofs of your attachment, and since these two works (the new building and the renovation and enlargement of the old) are very dear to my heart, and I feel that my

life is bound up with their accomplishment, I know I may earnestly ask for your most liberal, prompt, and hearty response to this appeal. Give, then, my dear friends, to both funds if you can, for the Old Home claims your help, because you enjoy the comfort and advantage of it week by week, and moreover it has a debt, which must be removed as soon as possible, and the work at Westbourne Park deserves your aid, because it is our contribution towards the spread of Christ's glorious gospel amongst our many needy neighbours."

"We made our prayer unto our God . . . so the wall was finished," said the brave prophet-chief, Nehemiah. In this spirit, and with this faith, the Praed Street Church laboured incessantly during the intervening three or four years to successfully complete their project at Westbourne Park. The memorial stone was laid July 10, 1876, by Sir Henry M. Havelock, Bart., V.C., M.P., and Dr. Landels, then president of the Baptist Union, delivered an address. In the following year the church was opened for divine worship, having cost in all £15,000.

At the opening ceremony the pastor read the constitution of the Church, which, in accordance with his conceptions and sympathies, is broad and embracing. He laid down its three distinctive principles as follows:—

I. The Church is Congregational or Independent in its polity; recognises Jesus Christ as its supreme authority; and takes the principles of the New

Testament communities as the expression of His will concerning the basis and conditions of united Christian life. Membership is therefore open to all who are members of "His body," *i.e.*, to all who confess faith in Christ, strive to learn and obey His law, not only in their individual life, but in and by association for mutual help, common worship, and beneficent work.

II. The Church teaches that Baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is the privilege of each believer in the Saviour. Every applicant for membership is urged to consider the Lord's will on this subject, but the rule followed is, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," and act according to his judgment of the Master's teaching. The whole question is left to the individual conscience. The obligation to be baptized springs out of the relation of the soul to the Saviour, and not from the relation of the believer to the Church.

III. The Church is a brotherhood of workers for God and men. Each member is asked to contribute his full share to the spirituality and glow of worship, to the effectiveness of the whole work, and to the funds of the Church and its manifold organisations. Every one has some gift, whose use enriches the life and enlarges the usefulness of the Society (Rom. xiii. 6).

When the General Baptists fused with the Particular, another principle of constitution was added,

to this effect : "In Foreign and Home Missions, the education of ministers, and similar aggressive work, the Church is in union with the London Baptist Association, the Baptist Union and the Baptist Missionary Society."

His belief in immersion does not prevent his adopting a Dedication Service in addition. This he uses because of the fact that many of his people—like Congregationalists—desire to associate their children with the Church, and to seek its prayers, just after their birth. He has told me that at first his wife and himself, when they settled at Praed Street, visited the homes of the members, and there conducted the Dedication Service. He afterwards found that the Church, which is of a cosmopolitan character, and includes Methodists and Congregationalists, as well as Baptists, desired a public service, so that the members could take part in it. The late Rev. Edward White, the well-known Congregationalist, expressed to him on one occasion his belief that if this service were universally adopted amongst Baptists it would speedily lead to their union with Congregationalists.

For some time after Westbourne Park was opened the pastor preached alternately there and at Praed Street. He had an assistant, the Rev. W. J. Avery, who after a time undertook the oversight at the latter Church, and this plan is still adopted, but with home rule for the older community.

To attempt to chronicle details of the progress at Westbourne Park in later years would be impossible

here. There are few Nonconformist Churches in London with more comprehensive machinery. In later chapters some particulars are supplied of the principal organisations, such as the Preachers' Institute, Westbourne Park Institute, and the Mission and Philanthropic Agency at Bosworth Road. Also largely through the missionary spirit and self-sacrificing generosity of the Church, extension work was promoted at Ferme Park, Hornsey, Ealing and East Finchley. To-day the Rev. Charles Brown, one of the most cultured and earnest preachers in the whole denomination, with eloquence and devotion carries on the work at Hornsey with large and increasing success.

Dr. Clifford has received many invitations and suggestions to leave Westbourne Park. To all he turns a deaf ear. It is quite improbable that he will ever seek another pastorate. Perhaps the only office appealing to him now would be the Principal's chair at a Baptist College. But whilst he saw pastoral work to be accomplished, and his physical energies allowed him to grapple with it, he is the last man to choose the cloister in preference to the arena.

The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., Secretary of the Baptist Union, tells a characteristic story of "a great and attractive offer" which was made to Dr. Clifford on one occasion. "It unquestionably opened up a position of commanding influence," he says, "and it was before he had come to be the power he is now. Two of his deacons met on the morning of the day,

when a special deacons' meeting was to be held to consider the situation. One of them said to the other, "You, of course, will be there? It is very serious. They have offered the Doctor twice his present salary." Then replied the first deacon, "I shall not trouble to come. It is all safe. If they have offered Clifford any earthly advantage he will certainly refuse to go."

His attachment to his Church is only measured by the affection manifested towards him by his people. This is evident from the expressions of tender regard which they have shown on many occasions. In scores of instances these have been conveyed in encouraging private letters or thanks for spiritual assistance unconsciously given. At other times—and these have been many—a more public recognition has been made. The year in which he settled the Church accounts showed a surplus of £10, and this was voted to the young pastor. Again, in 1862, the ladies in the congregation presented him with a chair—this was at the time of his marriage—which bore the following inscription: "A testimony of Christian esteem presented by the contributors to the Rev. J. Clifford, B.A., pastor of the Praed Street Church, Paddington, February, 1862." The following year the Church gave him a purse containing £30, so that, accompanied by his wife, he might enjoy a summer holiday in Scotland. In 1875 overwork caused a serious breakdown, and again his life seemed in jeopardy. To express their thankfulness

for his recovery the members and congregation presented him with a purse bearing the following inscription : " Presented with 110 guineas to the Rev. John Clifford, M.A., LL.B., B.Sc., by the Church and congregation of Praed Street Chapel, London, as a token of deep love for their pastor. July 5, 1875."

On Dr. Dale's return from his Australian tour his Church at Carr's Lane, in celebrating the event, displayed the inscription : " We love you, and we tell you so." The Church at Westbourne Park has always acted up to this motto. I could give many other instances, but forbear, and simply quote in addition the following. Quite spontaneously he received from his Church secretary, January 31, 1894, a cheque for £50, accompanied by a letter signed by all the Church officers. In its stimulating thoughtfulness it must appeal to the hearts of many ministerial readers : " We, the undersigned officers of the Westbourne Park Church, have noticed with concern and anxiety that you have only been able to carry on your work with considerable effort and personal sacrifice and inconvenience, and that your health does not seem to be re-established since your recent illness, as we should have wished. We feel, therefore, that it would be most desirable that you should take an entire change and rest from all work for a short time. In our opinion this is necessary not only for your own immediate benefit but for the future welfare of the Church over which you have so long and so ably presided, and which we



Photo. Cassell & Co.

WESTBOURNE PARK CHAPEL (EXTERIOR).

feel you would be better able to serve if you would agree to give up not only all preaching, but all other engagements for a few weeks. We, therefore, desire to intimate that we have made arrangements for supplying the platform at Westbourne Park for four Sundays at least, after Sunday next, February 4th, and trust that early in March we may have the great pleasure of seeing you return thoroughly reinvigorated and physically able to resume your leadership amongst us. Assuring you of our sincerest sympathy with you in your temporary indisposition, and our earnest prayer and hope that we may soon see you again in the enjoyment of your old energy and power, with our heartiest wishes for your speedy and entire recovery." [Here followed the signatures of all the deacons.]

The officers of the Church deserve hearty recognition for the manner in which they have upheld their pastor's hands. They have not always agreed with all his views and sentiments, but they have recognised that in the essentials of a pastor's office he has been supremely loyal to the great Head of the Church and unceasing in his labours for the extension of the work at Westbourne Park.

One cannot measure the pastor's toils and sorrows, or his joys and disappointments during the past forty-five years. All the friends who were officers at Praed Street when he commenced his ministry are gone. He alone is left. But the years have proved too busy for regrets, even if he had not braced him-

self for strenuous deeds, oblivious of the circumstances of the hour. With Matthew Arnold, in one of his buoyant moods, one may say :—

“An impulse, from the distance
Of his deepest, best existence,
To the words, ‘Hope, Light, Persistence,’
Strongly sets and truly burns.”

He is filled with deep thankfulness that life has brought him for so long a period such manifold opportunities of rendering help and encouragement to his fellow-men. His ministry to-day is bright with hope and service. The gospel that he delighted to preach as a lad retains for him its power and freshness. His passion for saving his fellow-men has intensified with the years, and his power to accomplish work seems now even more vigorous than before. This ministry of forty-five years is indeed unique, and constitutes a bright chapter in the religious life of our great irreligious London.

CHAPTER VII

AS PASTOR

By Richard Mudie-Smith

DR. CLIFFORD fills so large a space in the life of this country, and exercises so great an influence in civic and national affairs, that some are apt to forget that public work, far from being permitted to monopolise his time and energies, claims but a minor portion of either. The Church of which he has been pastor for forty-five years, which is closely associated with his name and indelibly stamped with the impress of his powerful personality, holds, as it has always held, the primary place in his affections, and receives, as it has always received, service proportionate to the demands that position implies. The devotion yielded to avocations not directly related to Westbourne Park Church is an index to the zeal with which Dr. Clifford pursues his pastoral duties. Nor are they at fault who argue, if toil and enthusiasm such as we witness are laid at

the feet of duties this man regards as secondary, with what white-heat intensity must those duties he estimates as primary be pursued.

When Mr. Clifford, as he then was, accepted the call to Praed Street Baptist Church in 1858 the prospects were of a hue dark enough to demand an optimism he has never lacked, and the difficulties were of a strength tough enough to demand an ardour he has never lost.

Of the members who invited the young student to London only a few are still living; they form "the old guard" of the Church—grey and grizzled veterans who from youth to age have followed their leader with the simple trust and gay *abandon* of school-boys; who, whenever he called, were ready with their *adsum*; who kept pace with his swift steps even when he led them in ways they knew not; who, on more than one occasion, risked all they possessed for the kingdom (being justified by faith); and who to-day, with much of their natural force abated, neither suffer the ancient fires of their courage and venture to die down, nor permit their well-used swords to fret within frayed scabbards.

It will be seen that the relationship between pastor and people is of no ordinary kind. The roots of affection go deep down and ramify in every direction. There are memories interwoven of common sorrows and common joys, experiences luminous and dark, realised anticipations, deferred hopes, defeated plans, successful endeavours, strands in a mingled yarn

knitting minister and members in a bond strong as love and time can make it.

Before I go further I must touch for a moment on two of the ruling ideas of Dr. Clifford's ministry, as a right apprehension of those ideas is necessary if his work as pastor is to be understood. The first is his conception of a Church as a society of men and women who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Master and Teacher. Avowal of discipleship to Him is the only condition of membership at Westbourne Park. This conception of the Church as an outer circle of the home naturally involved the creation of the home atmosphere inside the Church ; all which failed to harmonise with this conception was eliminated, while everything which reminded men of their common sonship, and of the mutual responsibilities and obligations arising from that sonship, was included. The text chosen by Dr. Clifford as the motto for his ministry, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth," struck the keynote for each member. The second stock-idea which has characterised Dr. Clifford's pastorate is the recognition of God's claim to sovereignty over the whole realm of man's activity. He has persistently refused to label this work sacred and that secular, this day holy and that unsanctified, this place consecrated and that profane. On the contrary, believing life to be a great unity, he has sought to make all work sacred, each day holy, every place consecrated. It may be said that there is nothing new in either of

these conceptions. It would be strange if there were, seeing the vigour with which they have been proclaimed for the last four and a half decades ; but in 1858 these truths, novel, unorthodox, and unpalatable, found little favour. They contained the germ of the Westbourne Park Institute, which was an attempt to visibilise and crystalise the belief that it is the Church's duty to completely furnish men for every good work, and to provide, in addition to gymnasia for the soul, gymnasia also for both body and mind.

To-day the membership of Westbourne Park Church numbers over one thousand ; in addition there are many members of the congregation who, though not members of the Church, claim and get equal shepherding. The amount of work to be done by a man who has no assistant can be inferred from these figures. In order that Dr. Clifford may be lavish of his time where generosity is needed, rigid economy is practised whenever possible. For example, though ready enough to visit the sick, he expects "they that are whole" to visit him. To this end he is in his rooms at the Westbourne Park Institute every Friday evening from 7 p.m. till 10 p.m. Nor are his interviews restricted to members of the Church and congregation. The invitation is to everybody who cares to accept it. Those who avail themselves of this opportunity for a chat wait in a room provided for them, Dr. Clifford seeing each in turn privately. Perhaps I may be permitted to relate an incident from my own personal experience

illustrative of the variety of the demands made upon Dr. Clifford on these Friday evenings.

Not long after I joined the Church I entered for a certain examination in which algebra was one of the subjects. It was my custom to reserve for my interviews with Dr. Clifford those equations which I had been unable to solve during the week. These he would attack with infinite relish and corresponding success. Greek verbs, too, he would recite with a gusto worthy of "Paradise Lost." Moreover, he used to give me a text on which I was to base a sermon to be submitted to him on the following Friday. These samples of unbaked thought he would convey home to examine, recording his observations on the margin of the manuscript. I soon discovered that other embryo students beside myself were in the habit of "dumping" similar raw material on the unprotected shores of Dr. Clifford's scanty leisure. When one thinks of the sermons young men prepare, and, alas! sometimes deliver, I believe it will be admitted that the act I have referred to is a striking instance of Dr. Clifford's kindness. No less than twenty-six men have gone from Westbourne Park Church into the ministry; it may be safely asserted of each that he shared alike my guilt and gain.

In addition to members of Westbourne Park and other Churches who visit Dr. Clifford on Friday evenings are men outside all the Churches, to say nothing of "cranks" who are anxious to elucidate a mysterious passage in Daniel, or mendicants whose

woes exceed any foretold by that sombre prophet. Some who come are obsessed with doubts, others are possessed with evil spirits; friends, enemies, sinners, saints, journalists, socialists, anarchists, spiritualists, drunkards, gamblers, atheists, agnostics, politicians, and students are to be found waiting their turn to consult this specialist in the management of life. Dr. Clifford once told me that these Friday evenings exhausted him more than a Sunday's preaching. This is not surprising, for the case of each patient is thoroughly diagnosed and carefully prescribed for; the tax on brain and heart, on patience and sympathy, is severe, nor is there any respite until the last person has left the premises.

Dr. Clifford in the sick-room forms a companion picture to the foregoing. Perchance you are lying in bed feeling "dim, dumb, dowie, and damnable," as Robert Louis Stevenson expresses it, when a quick, light step arouses expectations which are realised a moment later. Surely there is some mistake! This little man, with the quiet voice, the deep-set, kindly, grey eyes, whose small hand grips yours so firmly—is this the great captain of the Lord, the Cromwell of the Free Churches, the champion of forlorn hopes and doomed ventures, the "heathen and publican" of heated High Church imaginations, the terrible, turbulent fellow who "turns the world upside down"? Impossible! The man before you breathes lowliness and meekness, not a trace of self-assertion or dogmatism. He brings with him an atmosphere suggestive

of "still waters and green pastures," reminiscent of the cloistered solitude of the study rather than the hurly-burly of the world. He speaks out of the depths of an unbroken serenity, a profound calm. You know he is a very busy man, yet there is about him an air of spacious leisure, of meditative moods, of wide margins to Time's page. Nevertheless, he is alive to the finger-tips, and surcharges you with his own opulent vitality. Whatever your interests he will be interested, and the next time he comes will bring some book, some story, some bit of news, treasured up for your especial benefit. He leaves you braced, encouraged, soothed, possessing something of his own benignant joy.

Another side of Dr. Clifford's character is seen at business meetings connected with the Church. At these he permits no dawdling, no long speeches, no wasting of time. Any one who has something to say bearing on the question being discussed is allowed to speak, but he must keep to the point and be brief, or Dr. Clifford will arrest his straying steps with, "Mr. Brown, you are wandering from the issue before us." It is a sheer delight to watch his mastery of detail. There may be a dozen amendments to a proposition and half as many riders to the amendments, attended by their respective movers and seconders, but Dr. Clifford never tangles the skein. "Mr. Jones, sit down; you are not in order: I have a note of your rider, and will take it in its proper place." "No, Mr. Smith, I cannot accept that amendment; it does not differ,

save in words, from that submitted by Mr. Robinson." A member rises to ask a question, but instead launches forth into an oration to his own manifest delight and everybody else's manifest despair. His flowing verbiage is stopped with, "Mr. Tireall, you are not asking a question, but making a speech; you must either put your question or sit down." "Cranks" and "bores," of whom every Church has its share, receive kindly but prompt treatment. No one is better aware of the uses of humour than Dr. Clifford, and should the atmosphere become heated he will interpose at the psychological moment with some joke, or counteract the accumulating irritable acid with some laughter-compelling witticism.

Only quite recently I was present at a business meeting which lasted for four hours, Dr. Clifford being in the chair the whole time. He arrived at 6.30, after a heavy day, to face a long and fat agenda. At ten o'clock the majority of the deacons present were suffering from exhaustion. Dr. Clifford, however, showed no sign of fatigue. He could not have been more alert, patient, and painstaking if the hour had been 10 a.m. instead of 10 p.m. Nothing was slurred over, no loose strings were left untied. At 10.30 I left, utterly tired out by the work and utterly amazed at Dr. Clifford's uncanny and unpardonable high spirits. A man who can crack jokes after four weary hours' agenda-delving must have a body like a spring mattress.

Should any one wish to witness for himself evidence of the intimate relationship existing between Dr. Clifford and his people, or desire to see whether the conception of the Church as a family is really realised, he or she should attend a Communion Service at Westbourne Park. On these occasions new members are received into the Church, while references, telling of personal interest and affection, are made to any who are sick, or who have died during the past month, such allusions being accompanied by some reminiscence or incident born of knowledge intimate and sincere. The hour is burdened with benediction. There is a hush, a solemnity, an awe, impressive, healing, quickening. Little imagination is needed to rebuild or rehabilitate the Upper Room, little effort is required to recall or retouch the unfading colours of an immortal picture. The subdued, tired voice sinking almost to a whisper, the prayer as a child's for simplicity, the confidence in a living, pulsating, toiling, Christ, the emotion hardly repressed when He is named, revive courage and devotion in a place hallowed by many memories of dedicated souls, and consecrated by many recollections of transformed, transfigured lives.

A sketch of a shepherd's labours which contained no reference to the lambs of his flock would be singularly and unpardonably incomplete. Dr. Clifford, like his critic of the crushed strawberry pamphlet, is in certain things a child, though his juvenility is manifested in directions other than those in which

Mr. Balfour is accustomed to amuse a patient and astonished world. For instance, Dr. Clifford is a perfect infant over sweets, and a box of chocolates will quiet him more effectually than a Bishop will arouse him. It is Dr. and Mrs. Clifford's custom in the winter to give children's parties at their home, when Dr. Clifford gets fearfully excited over "Clumps," "Dum Cranbo," and other equally weird and mystic games, while for variation he will drive the "Family Coach" or race round "Musical Chairs." From the annual Sunday School excursion, he is never absent. Loud would be the lamentations if he were, for does he not play cricket, dandle fretful babies, spur on stubborn steeds, draw recalcitrant corks, devise most lovely games, and gossip with the old people? The children are not forgotten at the Sunday morning service, a talk to them taking the place of the customary second Scripture lesson. Prior to the establishment of the P.S.A. at Westbourne Park Church it was Dr. Clifford's habit to visit in turn one of the five schools belonging to the Society, and two years ago he added to an already overcrowded day by occupying the Superintendent's chair in the Westbourne Park Sunday School during a temporary vacancy lasting several months.

I could relate many incidents from my own personal knowledge which would show how keenly Dr. Clifford concerns himself with the interests of the members of the Church ; owing to limitations of space one such illustration must suffice. In the fall

of last year the son of one of the families worshipping at Westbourne Park was appointed to a post in India. On his departure Dr. and Mrs. Clifford were at Liverpool Street Station by 10 a.m., intent on accompanying him to the vessel, notwithstanding the fact that the Doctor was exceptionally busy at the time. But Dr. Clifford had not waited till that gloomy, sunny morning to give practical proof of his regard, for the traveller carried in his pocket introductory letters to Dr. Clifford's friends in India. Arrived on board we inspected the ship and then gathered in the cabin, where, shutting out the tumult of voices and footsteps, Dr. Clifford commended my comrade to God's protecting care. By the time we reached Bishopsgate the hour was 2.30 p.m. It being a Friday, I purchased the *Church Times*, and while eating a chop I proceeded to masticate the never-failing slab of vituperation which week by week is thrown at Dr. Clifford's head. I remember the editor was in a particularly vicious mood, and I was anxious, if possible, to prevent the Doctor, who was looking over my shoulder, from seeing the navvy-like abuse. I failed in my endeavour ; he read the passage, and to my relief laughed heartily. " It's as good as *Punch*, and twopence cheaper," was his comment. I could not, however, help wondering how many of his slanderers would have given up so big a wedge out of their day in order to cheer a young fellow sailing for a foreign country and to console those who remained behind.

In the summer the Saturday afternoon excursions of the Rambling Club, and in the winter social gatherings of the numerous societies associated with the Church provide Dr. Clifford with opportunities for fraternisation. Fifty or sixty members will assemble at the railway station to visit Eton College, Camden House, Harrow School, or Milton's cottage in Dr. and Mrs. Clifford's company. Given a fine day, no pleasanter method of spending an afternoon can be imagined ; a pessimist, let alone a poet, "could not be but gay, in such a jocund company." Hilarity marks us for her own, and the oldest renews his youth. The destination is an entirely secondary affair. The journey is the thing. Tea, served in a picturesque spot, foresought and foreordained by the secretary, follows the examination of the local "lion" and breaks the ramble in two. The meal over, pipes are lit and the development of rustic humours contemplated from the old bridge or the village green ; clusters of companions, forming for the homeward walk, splash the white road with moving blots of black which slowly dissolve in the descending dusk ; the air is populous with gnats and laden with innumerable scents ; the chime of a neighbouring bell floats lazily and melodiously across the intervening fields, warning the last straggler to depart ; the day dies leaving recollections as numerous as the gnats and as fragrant as the air.

Not a single cloud has arisen between pastor and people on the blue expanse of forty-five years ; not

a single jarring note has marred the long harmony. I do not mean that either Dr. Clifford's members or deacons have always seen eye to eye with him. He is the last man in the world to wish for such evidence of mental stagnation. For half a century he has been training each person in his congregation to do his own thinking, create his own creed, and work out his own salvation. Under these circumstances it would indeed be pathetic were proof forthcoming of the frustration of his toil. On the contrary, he rejoices in men and books which run counter to his own mind, and welcomes "each rebuff that turns earth's smoothness rough." But even when the divergence of view has been most sharply defined, it has never lessened the affection and trust either of his people for Dr. Clifford or of Dr. Clifford for his people. Both he and they express their opinions with naked frankness. Of his sincerity and honesty they are more sure than they are of the Pole-star. The recording angel himself would get short shrift from them did he ascribe any mean motive or unworthy action to Dr. Clifford; while it were wiser and safer to rob a lioness of her whelps than to reflect on Dr. Clifford's members in Dr. Clifford's presence. I will give one proof of my contention that disagreement with Dr. Clifford's views does not involve "an intolerable strain," let alone severance.

We have had worshipping with us for several years at Westbourne Park Church a lady who was an intimate friend of the late Charles Haddon Spurgeon

and also of his family. Does she then accept Dr. Clifford's views on Theology, agree with his attitude toward the Higher Criticism, or share his political beliefs? Not for a moment. She clings to the theory of Verbal Inspiration, and considers that the late war in South Africa was inevitable and just, and yet she remains a devoted member! With Moses, when confronted with an astonishing phenomenon, I said, "I will turn aside now, and see this great sight." I discovered that it is Dr. Clifford's piety which more than conquers her lack of sympathy with his opinions; his spirituality which more than atones for his heterodoxy; it is the triumph of character over creed. No man, she holds, "could pray and live as he (Dr. Clifford) does, who did not 'dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty.'"

One of God's saints herself, she recognises by many infallible signs a kindred dweller in the Kingdom.

Notwithstanding numerous invitations to larger, wealthier Churches, Dr. Clifford has remained faithful to his first love. Professors' chairs and Parliamentary seats have been alike declined. Neither money nor "Society" has any charm for him. In habit he is wedded to "a clean austerity": simplicity dominates his home, his meals, his holidays, his pleasures. He is on familiar terms with omnibus drivers and conductors, and travels third class by rail "because there is no fourth." His bookcases are made of deal, and his books which he is ever ready to lend to those

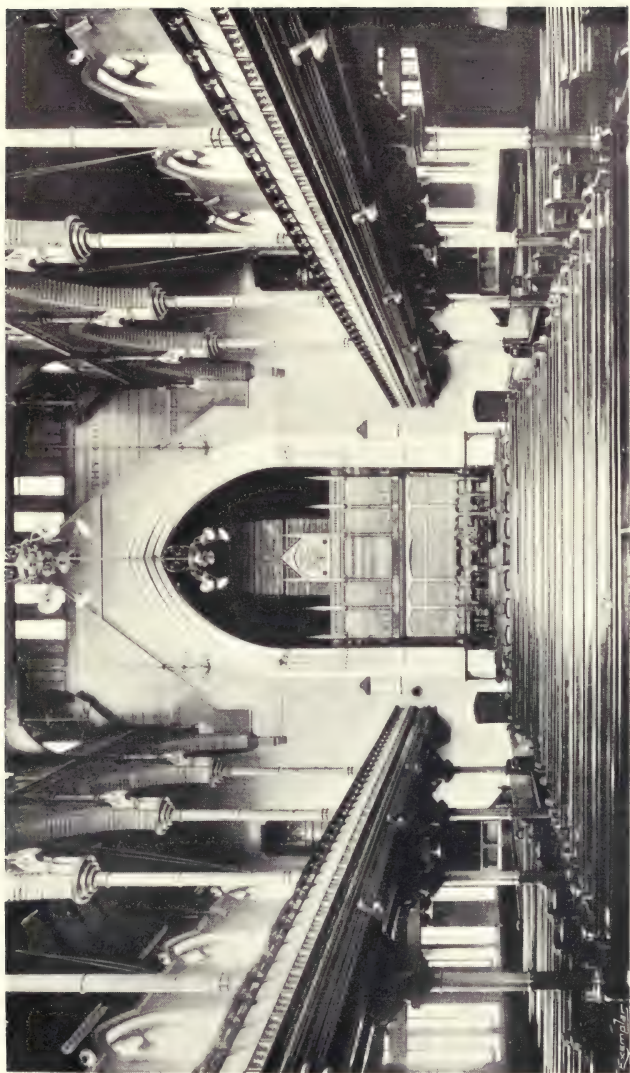


Photo. Webster & Son, Bayswater.

WESTBOURNE PARK CHAPEL (INTERIOR).

who need them, are bound in cloth. Did he consult his own inclinations he would leave their company but seldom, nor can any but those who are his intimates estimate the greatness of the sacrifice laid upon the altar of public service. Not that he regards anything he does or foregoes in this spirit ; his joy equals his offering. Branded with the scars of slavery to Christ, he lives with one aim, to commend Him to men. He is one of those rare spirits who are exalted by defeat and humiliated by victory. For ten years I have been honoured with his friendship. Never once during the whole of that period have I heard him, even in the freedom of private conversation, pass a single uncharitable judgment, or say a single unkind word ; for his most bitter and relentless enemies he will make excuses, discovering in them virtues which I, in my indignation, often altogether fail to see. God has dowered him with a great brain, a great heart, a great soul. There is nothing little about him save his body. Speaking for myself, and for hundreds of young men scattered over the earth,

“I found him whom I shall not find
Till all grief end,
In holiest age our mightiest mind,
Father and friend.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE PREACHER'S OFFICE

"H E'LL do, he's got preaching blood in him," exclaimed an aged woman after Dr. Clifford preached his first public sermon in the early part of 1852. But he says modestly, "When I left College I thought I could preach. For two or three weeks afterwards I imagined I should be able some day or other to preach, but the longer I have been preaching, the further I seem to get from my ideal, and I am further from it to-day than ever. Still my consciousness of inadequacy for this high vocation does not diminish my faith in its exalted functions, nor prevent me from recognising the splendid contributions of genius, culture and spiritual power made by the pulpit of the day to the best life of the world." He has also added that "like George Eliot's Amos Barton, who could not preach on a particular theme without giving himself 'a slap in the face,' so I find it good to give myself such a slap sometimes, and I need not say how necessary it is."

1852-1904. Fifty-two years of preaching and still the "young" man eloquent!

He reminds one of an Old Testament prophet with a message for critical occasions. There is the same strong insistence on ethics, and the same promise of the Messiah's coming. Most of his books are sermons, and on the platform he does not escape the didactic methods. His pulpit utterances are delivered with an overflowing eloquence which carries him with irresistible force from point to point until he reaches the climax of the peroration. The critic complains that his style is not purely literary in form, that there are too many adjectives and an excess of "glow." But whose sermons would find absolute approval with the critics? To thousands of hearers every Sunday—and countless admirers in the Provinces, the Colonies and in America—his discourses are informative, high-toned, and instinct with the gospel of personal salvation. His intense moral earnestness and passion grip his hearers with unmistakable power, whilst his winsomeness acts as a persuasive to young and old. One cannot term him an easy preacher to follow. His matter contains so much intellectual reasoning and such wealth of quotation and simile that close attention is necessary in order to follow the definite plan which he lays down. He has been known to quote as many as fifty authorities in one special address. Emerson, naturally first, then Browning, and so on with Darwin and Wordsworth, Scott and Carlyle,

Bunyan and Sabatier, Cromwell and Döllinger, Erasmus and Calvin, Luther and Arminius, Melancthon and Zwingli, Seely and Green, Pusey and Keble, Francis of Assisi and Robert Hall, to name only a few.

A Paddington journal contrasted the Bishop of Ripon, who was then at Lancaster Gate, with Dr. Clifford, and remarked of the latter that he "has little of the fascinating grace of delivery which we see, for instance, in almost its most perfect form in the Rev. W. Boyd Carpenter, of Christ Church, Lancaster Gate. But Mr. Clifford strikes more deeply, if not so agreeably. His one desire is to get as far as possible into the hearts of his hearers." This analysis was made many years since, but we can appreciate its accuracy and sympathy.

His impromptus are often singularly illuminative and stimulating. On one occasion—the incident is narrated by an American writer—he had quoted Bonar's hymn—

"No slacker grows the fight,
No feebler is the foe,
No less the need of armour bright,
Of shield and spear and bow."

When he came to the words, "No slacker grows the fight," he stopped and turned a searching gaze on his audience. "Slacker!" he cried, "not a bit. It grows fiercer. We are going into a time of severe conflict. You will need strength for that warfare, and I am here

to testify to-night that the only way to bear anything that has to be borne, and to do whatever needs to be done, is to dwell in living union with the living Christ."

His sermons inspire men of divergent thought and separated by social and political circumstances. One most interesting instance is revealed in the letter below from an Archbishop of the Irish Protestant Church received a few years since. His Grace confessed that he had adopted thoughts from two volumes of the Doctor's sermons which had been given him by one of the latter's deacons. "Christian thought is very wide," remarks the Archbishop. "A High-Churchman apologising for a plagiarism (of which, however, he is almost proud) to a minister of your Church sounds rather strangely!" "The explanation of the matter is," he adds later, "that I met your deacon travelling to Oxford, that I read some sermons of yours which he gave me, that I had previously determined to preach on 'The Incarnation' in the Abbey on my return from Aix, that my mind was saturated with your rich and nobly expressed thoughts, that I really somehow forgot that they were not my own, until after I had preached. We differ upon a good many details of theology, and upon the whole line of politics, but I thoroughly respect and admire your thought and remain your debtor."

Whilst the intellectual predominates there is a tender strain which appeals strongly to another

section of his congregation. A member of the writer's family heard the Doctor preach on one occasion upon the "Bright and Morning Star." Years passed away and the words were forgotten, but the impression remained with him until his death. In his last days he said, in faltering tones, "If ever you have an opportunity tell the Doctor I never forgot that sermon." The memory of it had come back like the morning star after a night of stress and darkness, and cheered and encouraged the dying soul as doubtless it has brightened the lives of many others long after the words were uttered, and all unknown to the preacher.

To enable the aged and infirm to hear him the deacons open one of the vestries—approaching the platform from which he preaches—so that these, sitting at ease on comfortable chairs or sofas, may join unobserved in the service, and listen to the sermon which otherwise would have been denied them. This plan offers suggestions to other churches, and if adopted would benefit a class of worshippers usually prevented from attending a public service.

With such wealth of material before one it is extremely difficult to choose three passages illustrative of his style; but I venture to give the following (1) from a sermon preached at Swansea; (2) from the series, "Is Life worth Living?" and (3) from a sermon on "Browning" in "Typical Christian Leaders."

(1) "Yesterday morning I looked upon your Swansea Bay for the first time. It was a sight enough almost to distress one. The mists spread themselves over the waters, the clouds hung above, and the craft there were tossing hither and thither, as it in great peril. But when I rose this morning and opened my window, I looked again on Swansea Bay, and how different the scene! The golden glory shimmered over the whole picture, and there, as I beheld the scene, I thought when we look upon our humanity in the darkness of its sinfulness, our hearts are filled with sorrow; but as the beams of the Sun of Righteousness flash themselves right across, hope is born, effort is created, faith is strengthened, and we go forth to our task resolved that we will use all the power God gives us for the salvation of our fellow-countrymen."

(2) "Think you (asks Dr. Clifford), would Ignatius Loyola have been the chivalrous missionary he was if he had not passed through the fires of personal suffering? Was not John Newton led by affliction to the Saviour. Did not John Bright begin his philanthropic career at the grave of his wife? Listen to the keynote of his public life—a note of sympathy with human suffering ringing loud and clear in all his speeches; but most distinctly heard in his speech at the inauguration of the Cobden memorial, when he said, referring to the commencement of his public life: 'At that time I was at Leamington, and I was then, on the day

when Mr. Cobden called upon me—for he happened to be there at the time on a visit to some relatives—in the depths of grief, I might say of despair, for the light and sunshine of my house had been extinguished. All that was left on earth of my young wife except the memory of a sainted life, and of a too-brief happiness, was lying still and cold in the chamber above us. Mr. Cobden called upon me as my friend, and addressed me, as you might suppose, in words of condolence. After a time he looked up and said, "There are thousands of homes in England at this moment where wives, mothers, and children are dying of hunger. Now," he said, "when the first paroxysm of grief is past, I would advise you to come with me and we will never rest until the Corn Law is repealed." I accepted the invitation.'"

(3) "Oh! it is worth untold gold to remind men so persuasively of the sovereignty of the spiritual in a world whose far-stretching greatness and crowding myriads crush out of us the sense of our individual worth and will, and force us down to a pigmy's condition and makes us content with a pigmy's work! And these spiritual prerogatives and possibilities are claimed for each one of us. Browning does not drown the individual in the race. No illusion from the seething masses of men blinds him to the infinite value and tragic significance of each life. Every man is dear to God, has place in His plan, is sunlit by His love,

visited by His spirit, and guided in his course by His providence. Every life is a channel through which God seeks to pour new force into the world ; so that 'by the advance of individual minds the slow crowd may ground their expectations eventually to follow.'

“‘God ! Thou art love ! I build my Faith on that,
Even as I watch beside Thy tortured child,
Unconscious whose hot tears fall fast by him.
So doth Thy right hand guide us through the world
Wherein we stumble ?’”

In company with a large number of well-known preachers—Anglican as well as Free Church—he usually “improves the occasion” after a national event or the death of one of England’s foremost sons, by delivering a special sermon. In the latter event this takes the form of character study—warning or eulogy. Biographical subjects have always appealed to him. “God Himself gave them the Bible full almost of biographies,” he says, “and as access to the human heart is always quickest through human experience, in life’s stories they surely found their most potent illustrations.”

In the Primrose League sense Dr. Clifford does not preach political sermons. There is no question of party advantage, for he was never a mere party hack. He simply brings his virile conscience into play to illumine the path of those who come to hear him for guidance and decision. He visualises the

polling booth and the ordinary election machinery, and men see these in a guise never before visible to them. They become citizens of no mean city, with privileges which are imperative duties. Their choice is not of the Blues or the Reds, but of Right or Wrong, Progress or Retrogression! His hearers thenceforth dream dreams and see visions of a purified London with a strong civic spirit and a passion for the social and moral betterment of its inhabitants. Upon national issues he is equally emphatic. Imperial England must, according to his conception, be liberty-loving, chivalrous, and the stern upholder of righteousness at all costs and against all parties.

He prepares most accurately and definitely. Unlike Charles Haddon Spurgeon and other of his contemporaries, he cannot sit down for a brief hour on the Saturday and at its close be ready with his next morning's sermon. To him it is a task requiring time, study, and hard reading. He leaves little to chance. The heavy work made necessary by the Education campaign has not prejudiced his sermon preparation. After a week of public meetings he has managed, to the surprise of his friends and the despair of his opponents, to preach two fresh and up-to-date messages to his critical congregation at Westbourne Park. Notwithstanding the pressure, he makes few exchanges. As to the method of preparing his sermons he says—

“I write them out, and write them fully; then I make a digest, but never attempt to remember words.

My object is rather to re-think in public what I have carefully prepared in the study, which is to my mind the most effective means of bringing a man's personality into living contact with his audience and of imparting to them that which he himself feels and believes and is most eager to give. This is most conducive to spiritual tone and emotional glow."

His aids to the investigation of text and exegesis proper are found in "some of the best German commentators, such as Ewald, Delitzsch, Keil, and Lange. Amongst the English I think there is nothing better for fidelity to the original and suggestiveness than Professor Cheyne on the parts of the Old Testament on which he has written. He gives a clear, comprehensive meaning of the original. I never feel sure of success for any message I deliver unless I have first ascertained what the writer himself meant when the words were delivered and unless I am as certain as possible that I am uttering the thought of God as well as the words of man. With regard to the New Testament, I find Bishop Lightfoot one of the best helps among English writers, Godet among the French, while several of the German writers—notably Dr. Meyer—are very helpful in this department."

"I always have some book I am especially expounding," he further remarks, "instead of a second reading at my Sunday services, and I reckon to study that in the Hebrew, since it is generally

from the Old Testament. But whether from Old or New Testament I always make it my business to study that the first thing in the morning. This plan gives me daily contact with the original Scripture. I also keep up a close acquaintance with German literature and regularly read some German religious periodicals in order to keep abreast with the latest results of Continental criticism and research. Books of biography have a special fascination for me, and I invariably have one 'in hand.' I cannot afford to miss the contributions of scientific men, and therefore their writings enter into my scheme of reading. For mental stimulus and impulse I go to Browning first of all, to Ruskin, Carlyle, Emerson, Milton, and Shakespeare. The spiritually nutritive books of Thomas à Kempis, Frances de Sales, Père Grou, Brother Lawrence, Jeremy Taylor are familiar and highly valued friends."

Upon another aspect of the preacher's training and methods he further says—

"The problem for the preacher is to find out what he ought not to do ; to eject from his life the forces which would dissipate it. For this he must have a lofty ideal, which, like a magnet, would draw to his possessor the work for which he was fit and at the same time prevent him succumbing to the temptation to divert his powers in too many directions. The preacher must accept Kant's expression of the Pauline gospel and regard every man not as a means, but as an end. He must not be a theologian ; yet if

he did not know theology he would fall into many mistakes and do much mischief. The preacher should not be the general engineer of the charities of a town, yet he must be sufficiently in touch with them to prevent them becoming means of degradation. The method of the Christian preacher ought to be the application of the unchanging Christ to the changing conditions and the unchanging elements of human life."

His congregations are unique. On Sunday mornings there are present the well-to-do members of the Church, who form its working backbone, and supply much of the finances. Some people have expressed surprise that he can attract so many worshippers of this description. His heterodoxy and Radicalism, say they, must drive away all such. But they do not know him or his people. They are unaware of the stimulating sermons he preaches to the "believers" and the faithfulness with which they meet him on Sunday mornings.

In the evenings the congregations are more cosmopolitan, and the church is usually crowded to the doors. A large proportion of the morning's attendance is present, but one notes at night the superior artisan, the intelligent young man from business establishments, and medical and other students in the neighbourhood. Intellect attracts intellect. In many cases they have come to hear the able theologian, the brilliant pulpit orator, whose epigrammatic style, bubbling wit and trenchant criticism are so much in

advance of the ordinary sermon. Think you they escape the application and the moral? Nay! nay! nay! Otherwise he could never count upon such a bodyguard of young, earnest, clever men who assist to work the many organisations at Westbourne, and throughout life, whether here or in the Colonies, look to him as a teacher and master in heavenly things. Incidentally I might mention that, during his tour round the world, at almost every town of importance in the Colonies, young fellows came forward to shake him by the hand again, and to thank him for manly advice and sympathy given them years before in the Old Country.

A friend of the writer states, that when a young fellow of about twenty-five years of age, he came to reside in one of the many boarding-houses in Paddington and attended Westbourne Park Chapel with four other fellow-boarders. Although drawn from various spheres of daily duty, more or less antagonistic to religion and where chapel-goers were liable to be scoffed at, they attended Dr. Clifford's preaching Sunday by Sunday, gaining thereby courage and sympathy to face the problems of life. With hundreds of other young men who attended Westbourne Park, they felt that he exercised an irresistible influence over them—he understood them, knew their religious doubts, tackled the disputable points of the Bible and cleared away the mists of unbelief from their minds. Many of these men never came into personal contact with him, but dispersed as

many now are, all over the world, they follow his career with deep and affectionate interest.

Several of his most notable sermons have appeared in book form, *e.g.*, "Daily Strength for Daily Living," twenty sermons on Old Testament themes; "Is Life Worth Living?" of which Charles Haddon Spurgeon wrote, "His work is well done, and is of a high order of literary effort, but we like best its firm faith and bright encouragement to souls blinded by the smoke of life's fierce battle"; "Typical Christian Leaders," and the "Secret of Jesus."

Many well-known preachers and speakers are bad listeners. This, however, is not one of Dr. Clifford's failings. He delights in sermon tasting. I have seen a little memoranda-book in which he recorded outlines of sermons by well-known men whom he heard in the five or six years succeeding 1856. The first reported is by Dr. Cumming, of Crown Court, the second by C. H. Spurgeon, in New Park Street, the fourth by Dr. Newman Hall, at the Old Surrey Chapel, and the fifth by Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool. So one might go through the list of the seventy sermons and note that he had listened amongst others to Dr. Legge, Revs. J. P. Mursell, T. J. Lynch, and Morley Punshon. When he came to Paddington the latter resided in the district, and the former confesses to the pleasure of running off on a week-night to catch some of the flavour of his spirit and his Christian enthusiasm and to enjoy the brilliancy of his style. Later in life Dr. Clifford

occasionally managed on Thursdays to hear Dr. Parker at the City Temple, or any noted Anglican who might be preaching on a week-day.

Canon Liddon was one of his favourite preachers. When the Canon's turn came at the Cathedral the Doctor made it a point to be present and study his message and style. With generous praise he has summed up his impressions in the following sentences: "The chief distinction of Dr. Liddon's preaching seemed to me to lie in its singular wholeness, its balance, its proportion, its harmony of different qualities of forces. It was severely intellectual, and yet throbbed with sympathy; often learned, but so free from pedantry and self-display, and so practical and human, that you listened as to something that immediately concerned you." Elsewhere he has said: "Canon Liddon is in many respects a typical preacher. In the fervid glow and burning intensity of his utterance, in the direct and practical drift of every sermon, in the overflow of soul and the capacity to set forth his logic all on fire, he is an example of the chief characteristics of the preaching of to-day." In some respects their gifts and style were alike, and it is scarcely surprising that the great preacher of the Anglican communion intensely appealed to his eager Free Church admirer. While the latter was attending the afternoon services at St. Paul's, he was by a natural coincidence pleading with his own brethren for more "intellectual vitality" in the pulpit.

He has assisted in the organisation of a conference on "Preaching" at the suggestion of Dr. Parker, and this reference affords the opportunity of quoting the latter's characteristic and epigrammatic letter :—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I want you to join me heart and soul in getting up the conference on Evangelical preaching. My idea is—

Tuesday, December 7th, 11 a.m.

Separate at 2, men dining where they please.

Resume at 4.

Tea on the premises about 6.

Public testimony in the evening at 7.

President of the Conference, J. P.

Secretary of ditto, J. C.

"The Conference should represent *all* sections. I have replies from Swedenborgians, Clergymen, Baptists, Congregationalists, none from Presbyterians as yet.

"All these are but hints which we can shape when we meet. What say you ?

"Ever yours,

"JOSEPH PARKER."

Like all true preachers Dr. Clifford loves his calling. It expresses to him the highest form of service, and provides opportunities for declaring the evangel which his fellow-men so sorely need and which he lives to utter. Writing in 1900 to a friend he said, "There is no greater joy to me,

after all, than that I find in desk work, *except the joy that comes to me in preaching.*" In closing the chapter let me quote his remarks at greater length on another occasion: "My highest ambition is to secure the application of the principles and forces of Christianity to the whole life of man, and preaching the gospel seems to me to be the best method of accomplishing this great aim. Therefore I have devoted all my powers to it. I do not, however, solely depend on my preaching, but also rely much upon personal intercourse with my people, being convinced that this element in a ministry is the proper complement of work in the pulpit. If left to myself, I should keep close to my study and to my own pulpit at Westbourne Park, but one is continually constrained to respond to public calls in all directions. I am often in doubt as to whether it is the wisest use a man can make of himself to respond to urgent appeals to help the various Churches and movements from all parts of the country; and I cannot resist the sigh for the quiet of the study and the joy of work amongst my own people."

CHAPTER IX

EDUCATIONAL AND MISSION WORK AT PADDINGTON

I.

“THE business of a Christian Church is to find out the real needs of the people in the neighbourhood in which it is placed and, as far as it can, supply all that will make for brightness and joy, for strength and service, for manhood and brotherhood,” Dr. Clifford said on one occasion. “Now thousands of young men and women are in our locality, and we have a direct ministry to them and are responsible to God for discharging it. Emerson said, ‘My special parish is young men inquiring their way in life.’ I have been in charge of that parish for forty-five years, and as long as God grants me power I feel that I am responsible for the faithful discharge of the duties of the parish. My work is to render any aid I can to young men and maidens in ‘managing’ their lives. ‘For what shall a man give in exchange for his life?’”

Since 1858 this has been his aim. With what success has he accomplished it? The reports of

Westbourne Park Institute for the past quarter of a century afford convincing reply. Here he and his officers have provided high-class educational facilities and healthy amusement for the young life in Paddington which has won praise from all classes in this large West End district. Without these inspiring associations the intellectual and physical culture of the neighbourhood must have proved considerably lower, for until 1903, when the Paddington Polytechnic was established, no other educational institute existed there.

The Institute was founded in 1878 for "the advancement of the study of science, art, and literature, and for the promotion of recreative and social intercourse." It commenced with a handful of members, but within a few years obtained 1,500, whilst over 60 classes were held every week. Teachers were provided for an infinity of subjects—biology and Spanish, photography and dress-cutting, French, German, and Italian, the sciences, mathematics, elocution. Every study, in fact, that might prove useful to youths or maidens in realising that "life is a business," as Robert Louis Stevenson says. A young man could enter the Institute and prepare for his matriculation, more skilfully fit himself for a responsible commercial post, or acquire an excellent grounding in technical subjects. It was not simply a glorified mutual improvement society without scientific basis. South Kensington recognised it, as also later the Technical Committee of the London County Council.

Dr. Clifford has never believed in half a man. Thus the Institute did not become simply a brain-producing factory, but possessed its throbbing human side. Athletics had their rightful place, and, more important still, the social spirit was always fostered by its wise leader and devoted helpers. The Rambling Club, the Cycling Club, the Cricket Club, and the Literary and Debating Society are all related one to the other in the plan upon which the Institute was founded and worked.

It is too late in the day to ask whether these agencies belonged of right to the Christian Church. Dr. Clifford found that no other organisation was attempting them in Paddington. The need seemed imperative. Young men and women were becoming demoralised for want of an educational and social centre. With the same breezy optimism and unflinching courage always characterising him he set to work with a faithful band of friends to offer a home to the thousands of young people living and working in the large business houses near Westbourne Park.

He entered into the work as an educational enthusiast, realising afresh all the deficiencies which he experienced in his early days and eager to assist his younger brethren and sisters. How intense is his pure love of education few people have any adequate idea. It is an important factor in the present controversy. What his opponents style "bigotry" is simply educational zeal. During the

past forty years in Paddington, amidst the engagements of a particularly busy ministerial life, he has cheerfully given time, study, and service to the quickening of the mental life in the neighbourhood in connection with the Institute.

The cost has been heavy, and most loyally his Church—never a rich community—has borne the larger part. It has taxed itself over and over again to provide for the extension and equipment of the Institute to which their pastor had pledged himself. The balance he has partly begged from outside friends. I find him writing privately in 1892: "At the chapel we are alive and aggressive. Our chief difficulty is lack of room for our educational and social work. We could do very much more if we had space. We are about to make an appeal, but I am not very sanguine as to results. Ours is an extremely 'churchy' district, and though all admire our work, we have to pay for it ourselves, and one or two of my best givers are not able to do what they were." Altogether he has raised in one way and another for Institute purposes several thousand pounds.

"Dr. Clifford is Westbourne Park Institute, and the Westbourne Park Institute is Dr. Clifford," so the late Dr. Donald Fraser, the well-known Presbyterian. "Without Dr. Clifford," adds Mr. Alfred P. Griffiths, the present secretary, "we should never have had a Westbourne Park Institute. Half the difficulties disappear when the President does all

that is possible to keep himself eternally young, ever sympathetic, and faces robustly the difficulties, social, intellectual, and spiritual, that make or mar a young man. The work of the Young Men's Society at Praed Street Chapel had been many-sided. There were evening classes under the direct charge of Dr. Clifford and social work of a bright and healthy character, and after nearly twenty years' work in Praed Street the work was carried on in the same spirit of earnestness at Westbourne Park."

It is interesting to note that Mr. L. F. Austin, the brilliant critic and writer, was, in those early days of the Institute, its most vigorous debater.

Another feature of the Institute deserves mention. Soon after its establishment the council introduced a lecture list second to none in the whole Metropolis. In fact, the daily press said it was "unique in London." All the celebrities of the day have lectured there, from the great Nansen, who received his heavy fees, downwards. Without a break these lectures have taken place every week during the winter months of every year for the past twenty-five years. Surely not an insignificant contribution on the part of a Baptist pastor and his Church towards the culture of Paddington!

Much of the educational work just described naturally belongs to the London County Council. But forty years ago, unless the Churches intervened, little was attempted. When, however, in 1903 the London County Council established a Polytechnic

in Paddington Dr. Clifford and his council cheerfully handed over their technical classes to this new organisation. But the Institute has not closed its doors. The engineer-in-chief has simply turned his train of usefulness on other lines and still maintains full steam ahead ! The main purposes of the Institute now are literary, social, and athletic.

An interesting story concerning the inception of this large and prosperous Institute remains to be told. In the early days of his pastorate Dr. Clifford discovered some of the young men attracted to his services were eager for self-culture. With readiness he agreed to start a class for the study of "Butler's Analogy." To a leisured man this would have involved little sacrifice, but to him it meant crowding another engagement into an already over-filled timetable. The men were unable to attend in the evenings, and with no Saturday or Thursday half-holiday, were obliged to meet him at six o'clock in the morning ! Under these conditions the class was commenced and prospered.

When the "Analogy" was finished he took up other studies, and thus these early morning classes were continued for twelve years. The Saturday half-holiday led to the classes being transferred to the evening of that day. Some years later he was lamenting to his young men that they did not seem so ready for literary culture as in the early days of his ministry, and he told the story of the "Analogy" class. Immediately he received a challenge to meet

them under similar conditions. "Will you try us, Doctor?" one young man asked. Agreeably surprised, he accepted the bargain. Thus commenced the Ruskin Class in 1892 at seven o'clock in the morning! It studied first "The Crown of Wild Olive," followed by "Unto this last" and "Munera Pulveris."

"When John Clifford of Westbourne Park is taken away—may the day be far distant—one of the most magnificent monuments of his work of self-sacrifice and love for young men will be the Westbourne Park Institute." Thus wrote one well qualified to speak. Probably few memorials would more adequately express his aims and gospel.

II.

Dr. Clifford's Church activities have not been confined to educational and social agencies. They embrace mission and philanthropic work at Bosworth Road, one of the most poverty-stricken districts in the Metropolis. The settlement—for that is his goal—is located in Kensal Green. The houses in the district are mostly let off in tenements, and Mr. Charles Booth singles out the neighbourhood because fifty-five per cent. of its inhabitants belong to the poorest class. Just another instance proving that the depth of poverty in West London is as intense, if not so apparent, as in the East.

The Doctor's share in the work at Bosworth Road has given him a peculiar and extensive acquaintance

with the dire effects of the housing problem. "The searchlight of the press," he said on one occasion, "was required on certain parts of Kensal New Town." The truth of this statement may be gauged by the statistics he gave at Bradford in 1902, to which reference is made in Chapter XIV.

For twenty-seven years Bosworth Road has been a part of his "parish," and he has directed a vigorous, aggressive, and enthusiastic work there, with the co-operation, besides Miss Dearle, the Deaconess who has done such excellent service in the district, of the late Mr. S. D. Rickards, the late Mr. John Green, Dr. Marshall, one of his "boys," Mr. Michael, Mr. Egerton, Mr. Hiscocks, and many others.

He started with premises originally used as a builders' workshop. Then in 1893 these were extended by the purchase of neighbouring stables, and converted to the use of the Mission at a cost of £600. Ten years later—1903—saw the erection of an entirely new suite of Mission rooms at a cost of £3,650, which were opened at the beginning of 1904 by Lord Monkswell. With much generous self-denial, Dr. Clifford and his friends raised £3,000 before the opening day.

I have dwelt briefly upon this phase of his pastoral life to show the many-sided agencies centred around Westbourne Park. It is not simply a preaching station, but an Institutional Church with its roots striking wide and deep into the social and religious life around. One also finds evidence of another fact

too often overlooked. The Free Church champion does not spend the whole of his time in a "tearing and raging" propaganda against the Education Acts, as some of his opponents delight to represent him. His public work is crowded in after his ministerial, and is only made possible by strenuous economies, and a heavy programme every day in the week.

There are almost innumerable societies at Westbourne. One might refer to the Country Ministers' Aid Society, of which Miss Kate Clifford is the honorary secretary—an agency for cheering Baptist pastors in rural districts with acceptable gifts otherwise inaccessible to them. Then, again, there are other branches of remedial and mission work. We could name also the Sunday Afternoon Lectures and the Sunday Evening Socials, both of which, when originally established, were novel features for a Christian Church to adopt. Since then other Churches have recognised their value. But sufficient has been said to show the character of the educational and mission agencies at Paddington in connection with Westbourne Park Church.

CHAPTER X

SOME CREATIVE INFLUENCES OF HIS MINISTRY

JOHN STUART MILL on one occasion defined the ends for which endowed universities are desirable as follows: "To rear up minds with aspirations and faculties above the herd, capable of leading on their countrymen to greater achievements in virtue, intelligence, and social well-being." This sentence spiritualised expresses Dr. Clifford's aim with the young men influenced by his ministry. He has sought to inspire them with the claims of a pastor's life. To him this is the highest expression of Christian service, and an ideal to which even ambitious aspirants should strive if they desire supreme satisfaction in their life work.

There are now nineteen men in the ministry of the Baptist or other Churches in whom he planted the seed of service, or fostered the impulse already expressed. These are as follows :—

G. H. Bennet (deceased, December, 1901).

B. V. Bird, A.T.S., Stevenage, Herts.

K. H. Bond, Swadlincote, Burton-on-Trent.

Gerald Bonwick, Salvation Army.

J. H. Callaway (deceased, 1902).

B. W. Jackson, Rochdale.

R. M. Julian, Burnley.

R. L. Lacey, Missionary, India.

N. H. Marshall, M.A., Ph.D., New Barnet.

J. F. Matthews, Latchford, Wigan.

F. E. Miller, Lincoln.

P. Morrison, Coventry.

H. C. W. Newell, South Africa.

S. B. Newling, Isleham, Cambridgeshire.

A. C. Perriam, Eastbourne.

J. H. Rushbrooke, M.A., Derby.

T. Rutland, Missionary, India, retired.

E. C. Saphin, retired.

W. Scriven (deceased, 1903).

R. Silby, West Kilburn, London.

S. Skingle, Bishop Burton, near Beverley.

C. W. Vick, Brondesbury, London.

C. H. Watkins, B.A., Baptist College, Nottingham.

J. Whitford (deceased, 1901).

W. Wynn, Earby, near Leeds.

They are all his "boys." His home is open to them. He shares their confidences. They receive his rebuke, advice, and sometimes—but rarely—praise. He has to take part in their ordinations, anniversaries, and red-letter day services. One of

them, Dr. Marshall, pastor of New Barnet Church, who has had a distinguished scholastic career, speaking of this personal influence, says—

“ He becomes the friend of the man he would help, and writes him letters—letters, not mere notes ; not hurried excuses for not writing more : actual letters. The art of letter-writing is said by some to be lost to-day, and perhaps it will hardly survive many more years of the present terrible scramble to be ‘on time.’ But when Dr. Clifford writes a letter to one of his young men he makes his correspondent feel that he has nothing in all this Tory-loving land to do but sit down and indite an epistle to Mr. Smones, just as when you call upon him on a Friday night he makes you for a while believe he would rather listen to you than deliver a speech on the Education Bill. Yes, it is this personal note in those letters of his that make them such efficient instruments for the continuance of that guidance which was begun from the pulpit and carried on by the care of the pastor. But when can he find time to write these letters? I frankly do not know, although I used sometimes to think (for the handwriting of great men is notoriously bad), that he must have composed some of them when on railway journeys, or when driving in a cab over the cobbled streets of some provincial town. But there they are. Things of inspiration and a strength for ever. I should like to quote some of them, to show the spirit of the model pastor for young men, but there are

few passages in them that would be thus illustrative and yet not too personal for these pages. This, however, will serve to suggest the vigour of his encouragement, and the contagious faith that inspired him: 'Cast yourself on God and ask for His Spirit's guidance and power, and you will find that through fire, still fire, yes, it is fire that purifies and prepares for service. . . . Above all, do not surrender a purpose formed in the clear light of day, because the night has come and all is gloom. Is the purpose good and right and of God? It is. Therefore you have to stick to it and achieve it. Moses did not get out of Egypt at one step, but he did leave it, and took Israel with him and the future of humanity. Courage, then, and work, still work; God's in His heaven, and you are His. Trust Him and follow on!'"

Many testimonies could be given of the peculiar influence he has exerted upon the inner consciousness of his "boys." Many of them have publicly expressed their indebtedness, but one hears privately the full measure of gratitude for all that he does in this respect. Quoting Dr. Marshall again, "The Doctor was not affrighted at my crude and curious heresies, as others had been. But he cheered me on and set me to work, until the development of a more vigorous moral life should make a clearer religious insight possible. Those were the days of Sunday School and Ruskin class and Temperance Crusade, the days when that life that had irresistibly thrust itself towards me from the pulpit began to nourish

in the disciple a similar vitality. I doubt very much whether Dr. Clifford knew of what was going on in the heart of this one among his many young men. It is not his habit to calculate the risks when he decides that a thing is right for him to do, nor is it his habit to be continually digging up the seeds he has sown to note what progress they make. In a letter written to me when somewhat despondent, he once said, 'Our growth is a subtle process. We cannot understand it. It is difficult to discover the forces that aid us most, the experiences that are most formative. The only safe course is to proceed from day to day filling each hour with high aims and a perfect devotion, and leaving the question of "fruit" unconsidered, in sure and certain hope that the Heavenly Husbandman will not forget that.'

One of his "boys" told the writer that the greatest influence he derived from the Doctor was a passion for social service. The latter's insistence upon the study of economic problems had considerably widened his conception of the ministry. Dr. Clifford invariably advises this course, for the reasons set forth in the following letter, written in 1885 to a friend concerning a young student: "I am trying all I can to impress him with the necessity of being fully equipped for the work that will be required of God's preachers fifteen and twenty years hence. Social problems are in the ascendant, and the preacher who has no clear and intelligent message about them will fail in doing all he ought. I therefore want him to go in for political

economy, the study of Socialism and the like. He has taken a class in Hebrew at University College, and I hope will take the other classes by and by, and so become as qualified as a poor mortal can for a brief and absorbing life for the highest of vocations."

The Preachers' Institute was his training school. Here he taught prospective ministers theology, logic, and the basis of sermon preparation. According to programme, sermons were fully delivered and discussed by the members, and at the close of the session he conducted an examination upon the work which had occupied the members' attention during that period. The training was more than academic. It brought them into personal contact with mission work, especially in the pioneer movements with which the Church has been connected. Glancing through the old programmes one recognises the names of men who are now well known in the Baptist denomination. The Institute was commenced in 1879 and still flourishes.

There are scores of other men whom he has assisted in their preparation for the bar, journalism, the teaching profession, medicine or commerce. Some have come to him in doubt concerning their life work. He has guided them to a decision. If a course of study was necessary his assistance was always at their disposal. Again, those helpful Friday evenings at his room in the Institute! Who can tell all that he has accomplished on these occasions

for his "boys." Minutely, carefully and skilfully he has come to their aid. Mr. Mudie-Smith gives a personal illustration in Chapter VII. A leisured man could not afford more time and attention to their problems. Yet "leisured ease" has never been his. This personal service has meant infinite pains to dovetail time and engagements into a sixteen hours' day.

Other ministers have worshipped at Westbourne Park in their student days, and recount impressions received from his sermons. The Rev. G. Howard James, pastor of the Osmaston Road Baptist Church, Derby, and a well-known Baptist minister, says that one of the two sermons which made the greatest impression upon him when a student at Regent's Park College was preached by Dr. Clifford. His sermon was upon "the joy of the Lord is your strength." Oh, the glorious optimism, the joyous *abandon*, the hopeful vigour of that service! It thrills the heart to recall the hour and the man. Thank God he is still with us—youthful and enthusiastic as ever."

During attendance at a Passive Resistance sale in the home counties recently, Dr. Clifford met one of his "boys," who, after roaming across China, had settled down as a newspaper proprietor in England. He had not seen the Doctor for many years, and, delighted with the occasion, sent the latter an account of his adventures, in which he remarked: "You are the same Dr. Clifford I knew and loved more than seventeen years ago. I went to China in '86, and both the

young men whom I took out with me to China are dead. One was drowned while crossing a stream on a pack-horse. I have been in perils myself in the same and other ways. On one occasion I was thrown in mid-stream only two hundred yards from the mouth of the river close by the sea. . . . It was an inspiration to hear your voice again, and to realise that your natural force had not abated with the years. . . . I remember you with feelings of love and deep respect, and can trace much of what I am to your helpful and inspiring life and teaching. Years ago I heard a young man say that he did not like you. I said 'Why?' He replied 'That you made him feel so *mean*.' Yes, that is true, and I told him that if he continued to attend your ministry you would knock that feeling of meanness out of him, and make him realise the true dignity of manhood."

Just one more illustration of his care and solicitation for young men in his Church. He can individualise his large congregations with an exact discrimination, which is somewhat unusual for preachers. I have been told of one who attended his services for some months, and then left the neighbourhood. A year or so afterwards he returned to Paddington, and joined the Church. At his first interview with Dr. Clifford, he was much surprised when the latter, shaking him by the hand, remarked, "I remember your face well; you are no stranger to me."

How his "boys" admire him! They have expressed their affection in innumerable ways—in

presentations and cheering illuminated addresses, and in directions which appeal more forcibly to him—by devoting their energies to causes for which he has laboured so long.

The writer has received appreciations from two “old boys”—Rev. J. H. Rushbrooke, M.A., of Derby, and the Rev. Walter Wynn, of Earby—concerning the Doctor’s influence upon them and their estimate of his work.

II. REV. J. H. RUSHBROOKE, M.A.

Few of the leaders of Britain to-day are so inadequately appreciated as Dr. John Clifford. Certain aspects of his character and service have indeed secured his countrymen’s recognition, but the man himself remains unknown to the general public. As leader of militant Nonconformity he wields an influence that is recognised by all, and not least by those who have special reasons to dread it. The conviction has forced itself upon political organisers, and through their representations even upon a detached and ill-informed Prime Minister, that this potent controversialist is capable of moving forces strong enough to overthrow a reactionary *régime*.

It is almost needless to state that no estimate could be further from the mark than that of opponents or ill-informed supporters to whom John Clifford is merely a politician. He is first and foremost a Christian minister, driven into the ministry of the Free Churches by deep religious convictions

resting upon a personal experience of the grace of God that has appeared in Jesus Christ. The work of the Christian ministry is his life-work; and the earnest plea which he addressed to the men of Birmingham in the course of a great mission in that city, "Be ye reconciled to God," expresses in a sentence his dominant purpose and deepest longing. That the revelation of God in Christ is adequate to the satisfaction of all the needs of the human spirit, and the solution of all the problems of human society, is an overmastering conviction which explains and accounts for every form of activity which he has embraced. Stirring appeals to the individual conscience abound in his preaching, and none has quickened the spiritual aspirations of the young more mightily than he. The problems which agitate the thought of his own time have touched him closely; and the results of his own wrestling and victory are seen in such works as that dealing with the "Inspiration and Authority of the Bible," which has fortified the faith of thousands in the value of the sacred writings even in the presence of modern thought. Questions social and international he has not hesitated to bring into relation with the Christian Gospel, and to seek in its principles a solution that shall exhibit itself as alone adequate.

To no living preacher has "the Kingdom of God" a fuller and richer significance than to him. It is from this standpoint that even his political work has to be judged. This man, though his topic be the

Education Act or Passive Resistance, and his immediate purpose the gain of a seat on behalf of an opponent of a Government that has wronged Free Churchmen, is no demagogue, but a prophet. Understood or misunderstood, standing with a minority—as on the question of the South African war, or the accepted leader of a great popular uprising—as to-day, he occupies his own lofty point of view and displays the self-same fidelity to principle. Oppressed and almost overwhelmed by the terrible conviction that his countrymen were in the wrong, he has uttered his testimony fearlessly, refusing to be cowed into silence or acquiescence; and his moral courage under such conditions has been matched by his uncorrupted simplicity in the days of success and of acclaim.

Such are the deepest impressions gained through a closer acquaintance with Dr. Clifford than is possessed by the average newspaper reader; but they are not alone. The writer was privileged for several years to listen Sunday after Sunday to discourses in Westbourne Park Chapel, and had unusual opportunities of appreciating the *pastoral* spirit of its minister. How tender and sympathetic was the presentation of the Divine Fatherhood! How the hearts of the congregation were moved when, in a prayer informed by the insight of a profoundly brotherly affection, he commended some individual sufferer to the compassion of God! The sorrows that had cast their dark shadow upon the home, and left it a scene

of desolation and mourning, were lightened for many bereaved as he spake concerning these experiences, and proclaimed the "Help of the helpless." The writer has seen tears trickle down his cheeks as he preached, almost overpowered by the emotion that possessed him; and knew (through many a personal confidence which abides in the memory, but may not be vulgarised in type) how genuine was the emotion and how compassionate the soul of the preacher. Not in the public services alone, but in the visitation of the sick and troubled, did such qualities reveal themselves.

One other aspect of the ministry at Westbourne Park must be touched upon for a moment even in this fragmentary sketch—the *positiveness* of the preaching. Dr. Clifford continually affirmed; mere negation, destructive polemic, had no place in his discourses. Men live, he knows, by the truth they accept, and not by the errors they reject. And he has laboured to set forth Christ as the secret of hope, of power, and of victory. And as he has preached his hearers have caught his own enthusiasm, have shared in his quenchless optimism, and been fired by the vision of noble ideals which he summoned them to actualise. To him the words of the Fourth Gospel may most fittingly be applied: 'There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.'

This is in no sense intended as a complete characterisation of my honoured friend and former pastor.

I have considered that, in respect of much that might be touched upon, the biography to which this sketch is appended will have made description superfluous. My purpose has been only to place on record a few personal impressions of one whose influence has shaped my own life, and to whom especially I owe any measure of usefulness that my personal ministry possesses.

III. REV. WALTER WYNN.

My love is not blind, and I determined as a boy not to allow Dr. Clifford's fascination to mesmerise me, although I came perilously near that mental disaster! His influence over me was and is indescribable. He baffled me as a boy; he bewilders me as a man. It is his complete simplicity, naturalness, and ease that make a man familiar with him. He thus has to pay the penalty of his own meekness. I have never known him flatter or praise any of us; but wait! I'm wrong: he did write me once about a speech I made, and said something that occupied *a whole line of seven words*. He did! But it is not his way. The hand-grip, the smile, the infinite kindness are his methods.

Dr. Clifford is not, in my judgment, a born orator. He is a master of the arts of acquired speech. The water does not flow from him as from a fountain. It seems to do sometimes; but it always gets pumped up, and sometimes I have seemed to hear the handle at work! But

when his soul is blazing—oh! get out of the way! I never heard from ordinary lips anything like it. He is Gladstone and John Morley rolled into one at such a moment.

I only know one thing that makes me quarrel with Dr. Clifford. He is sanguine, optimistic, hopeful, courageous—when everybody else goes home! Here is the one point of his insanity! He will not be sane like we are! We know when we are beaten, and like brave men say so, and go home with our heads dropped. The next morning we read, "Great Speech by Dr. Clifford." Oh, that man! How he mocks our feebleness! How, like Ajax, he smites the lightning! How irritating to hear him say we can do all that he has done. But how we love him!

IV.

One other point deserves mention. On New Year's Day for many years past he has delivered a message to young men concerning the events of the closing twelve months. His practice is to pass in review the outstanding incidents and casualties, from which he extracts warning or hope. The numbers present and the interest aroused by the publication of the address afford indication that this is appreciated, not alone by young men, but by others. A well-known *littérateur* of the Roman Church wrote him in January, 1902:—

"Your New Year's address has been read to me, to my great delight; and I venture to think you

may like to hear of my thorough adhesion to everything contained in it, except, of course, your girding at the Catholic Church. I am a Catholic layman, and cannot of course agree with that; but for all else that you say I cordially thank you."

CHAPTER XI

POSITION AMONGST THE BAPTISTS

FIRST a Christian. Then a Baptist. Dr. Clifford is to-day one of the greatest forces in the Baptist Union. In 1892 the Rev. W. J. Avery, formerly assistant secretary to the Union, gave a list of the distinct services to the denomination which Dr. Clifford has rendered from 1872 and onwards for twenty years:—

“In the General Baptist Association he filled almost all the offices of distinction and influence,” says Mr. Avery. “His presidential address at Nottingham, in 1872, on ‘Jesus Christ and Modern Social Life,’ was a masterly exposition, and it reads now like a prophecy of ‘the things that would shortly come to pass’ in regard to the specific work of the Christian Church. He was one of the founders of the London Baptist Association, and has been in turn its secretary and its president. In connection with his presidency for the year 1879, the chapel at Haven Green, Ealing, was built at a cost of £9,950, and it was opened on the 25th of May, 1881. The subjects

of his presidential addresses were : (1) 'The Work of Church Leaders'; and (2) 'The work of Church Members.' He has been on the executive of the Association almost continuously from its commencement. The Baptist Union and the Baptist Missionary Society have frequently been assisted by his advocacy. His sermon on 'The Living Christ' fitly opened the meetings at Nottingham in October, 1873, and will not be readily forgotten. In April, 1876, he preached at Camden Road Chapel for the Missionary Society on 'The Future of Christianity,' and in October, 1891, at Manchester, on 'The Coming Sovereignty of Man.'

"His services at Baptist meetings were so frequent and important as of themselves to render inevitable his election to 'the highest dignity' the denomination could confer, and accordingly he became President of the Baptist Union in 1888. At Birmingham, in the autumn of 1876, he read a valuable paper on 'Religious Life in the Rural Districts of England'; at Bradford, in October, 1884, he appeared on the Missionary and the Union platforms; in the spring of 1885 preaching, and in the autumn speaking, for the British and Irish Mission; at Bristol, in 1886, reading a paper on 'A Ministry of Power the Necessity of the Times'; at Sheffield, in 1887, presiding at a meeting for working men; at Cardiff in 1890, speaking on 'The Christian Priesthood,' and at Manchester, in 1891, reading a paper on, 'The Christian Conception of

Society'—surely he has realised, in regard to the Baptist Union, the truth of one of his favourite sayings, 'God's reward for work done is more work to do.'

"It should be mentioned that he was an originator and a first secretary of the Baptist Total Abstinence Association, and in the cause of temperance generally, as well as in that of social purity, he has been an untiring and uncompromising champion."

Since 1892 he has again served the Union as President, taken part in the programme of nearly every Baptist Union assembly, and assisted in opening the campaign for the Twentieth Century Fund.

In addition, he served the Baptists in their press by editing the *General Baptist Magazine* for fourteen years, then latterly becoming senior editor of the *Baptist Union Magazine* and Baptist editor of the "Review of the Churches." He edited two editions of "The English Baptists: who they are and what they have done," and three articles from his pen on "John Smith," "General Baptists," and "Dan Taylor" appear in the third volume of Schaff's "Religious Encyclopædia."

Dr. Clifford's influence in the amalgamation of the General Baptists with the Particular, assisted to carry through one of the best pieces of constructive statesmanship in the Free Churches. His participation in the union was only equalled by that of the Rev. Charles Williams, of Accrington, who represented the latter body.

To appreciate the situation we need to remember that the Baptists date their origin back to the beginning of the seventeenth century, when they broke away from the early Separatists for two reasons: (1) That the ceremony of Baptism was only for believers, and its only scriptural form was by total immersion; and (2) that only those so immersed were qualified to partake of the Lord's Supper. But there were two companies. The General Baptists started into existence in 1611 or 1612, holding the Arminian belief that the death of Christ conferred equal benefits on all mankind. The first Particular Baptist Church belongs to 1633, and was Calvinistic, and held that the privileges of the Atonement were reserved for "an elect few only and absolutely." For two hundred and fifty years the two wings of the Baptist army maintained separate organisations, missionary societies and traditions. During the major portion of the time they remained entirely distinct and without interchange of pulpits or friendly exchange of views. Gradually their differences paled before increasing charity, and possibilities of discussing union became evident.

In 1886, the Rev. Charles Williams, who occupied the chair of the Baptist Union, invited the members to consider the desirability of terminating the division of Baptists into "General" and "Particular" as inaccurate, misleading, and injurious. This was followed by the hearty and unanimous vote of the Baptist County Associations and of the Baptist

Union in favour of the perfect fusion of the Baptists in England. The Baptist Missionary Society also did its utmost to promote agreement.

In all the negotiations which followed Dr. Clifford took an important part. When the decisive vote was taken at the Assembly of the General Baptist Association, held in Enon Chapel, Burnley, June 25, 1891, he was president for the year, and experienced the joy of declaring the resolution for union carried by one hundred and fifty-five votes to thirty-nine, after a memorable sitting of four hours.

In his presidential address he discussed "The Coming Theology ; or, the Primitive Christian Faith ; the source and basis of a living and progressive Christian Theology." "What caused the desire for union?" he asked. "What was the cause or causes of this singular phenomenon? Was it indifference to vital or necessary truth? This could not be, for the pursuit of truth was never more fearless and vigorous, nor the utterance of it more frank and free. Nor could it be the blind desire for monotonous uniformity. That fashion had spent itself in the Churches. Was it then, the 'spirit of the age,' the growing sense of the oneness of humanity and the general diffusion of a more human and more Christian spirit throughout the Churches? No doubt it was so. *All these movements for union sprang from that substantial unity in thinking and in belief of the Christians of this day on the fundamental facts of Christianity ; and their increasing harmony in the*

interpretation of the gospel and the translation of its capital ideas in the probity and action of the Churches. It was the universal gravitation of the Churches of Christendom towards the faith of 'the Great Forty Years'; the gradual but inevitable surrender of the seventeenth-century theology, and a real advance to the theology of the New Testament."

At the suggestion of the Rev. Charles Williams, Dr. Clifford's name was submitted to the General Purposes Committee of the Baptist Union as successor in the chair to Dr. Culross. It had been similarly mentioned before, but when approached he had refused. On the present occasion the committee unanimously approved, and Dr. Booth, the secretary, in writing him as to the result, remarked, "I need not say, my very dear friend, how pleased I shall be to work under your chieftainship." Therefore in 1887 he acted as vice-president to Dr. Culross, and in the following year succeeded to the chair of the Union—the highest honour it could offer him.

But prior to the latter event Mr. Spurgeon had raised the Down Grade controversy by his articles in the *Sword and Trowel*. In consequence, the Council meetings of the Baptist Union formed the arena of vigorous debates arising from the charges levelled against the Baptist ministry, whilst the Churches throughout the country ranged themselves in opposite camps. It was an undignified spectacle, and the suspicion, bitterness, and uncharitableness thus

engendered lingered in the denomination for many months. At one time it almost seemed that the Union would be irretrievably injured. Another result occurred through the separation of Mr. Spurgeon from his brethren—a gulf which death left unbridged.

This is scarcely the occasion for a history of the Down Grade question. Its relevance, here, however, depends upon the extent to which Dr. Clifford bore his share in a lamentable discussion. As vice-president of the Union he naturally took a foremost part. When Mr. Spurgeon left the Union, Dr. Culross, himself, Dr. McLaren, and Dr. Booth were selected by the Council to interview him. This meeting took place on Friday, January 13, 1888, when all were present except Dr. McLaren, who was absent through ill-health. The *précis* of the opening statement by the Union deputation to the pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, largely framed by Dr. Clifford, was as follows :—

“1. We are come to deliberate with you on the *maintenance* of the union in truth and love and good works of the Baptist Union.

“2. The circumstance that threatens that unity with a breach is the resignation of C. H. S.; therefore our first question is—

“Whether anything has occurred since the resignation was sent in to the secretary to induce Mr. S. to consider the possibility of withdrawing it?

“3. If not; our next question is—

"Can we do anything now that will secure that result? If so; what?"

"4. In addition to the above, the unity of the Baptist Union is menaced by the charges of C. H. S., that—

"(a) It is a confederacy of evil ;

"(b) That there are men, unnamed, who are disloyal to the Evangelical faith.

"Will C. H. S. withdraw (a) or give the evidence for (b)?"

The report of the deputation submitted to the Council was as follows :—

"In answer to various questions put to Mr. Spurgeon, the following statement was mutually agreed upon as representing Mr. Spurgeon's view of the case :—

"(a) Mr. Spurgeon cannot see his way clear to withdraw his resignation.

"(b) Mr. Spurgeon gave the deputation the following statement :—

"In answer to the question what I would advise as likely to promote permanent union in truth, love, and good works, I should answer—

"1. Let the Union have a simple basis of Bible truths : these are usually described as 'Evangelical doctrines.'

"2. I know of no better summary of these than that adopted by the Evangelical Alliance, and subscribed by members of so many religious communities for several years. The

exact words need not be used, of course, but that formula indicates the vein of truth which is most generally followed among us, and should be so followed.

- “3. I greatly rejoice in the Declaration proposed by Dr. Angus, so far as it goes, but its omissions will suggest as much as its assertions. (Signed) C. H. SPURGEON.

“(c) Mr. Spurgeon would not undertake, on these conditions being complied with by the Union, to rejoin it. He would wait and see how it worked.

“(d) I do not think it is, knowingly so, a ‘confederacy in evil.’ Mark my words, that it begins to look like a confederacy in evil.

“(e) Mr. Spurgeon positively declined to give the names of any brethren, since he did not believe that the Union had any authority over them, nor did he know of any one who had violated our constitution, because he did not believe there is any power under our constitution for dealing with the utmost divergence of doctrinal opinion.”

Mr. Spurgeon's reply caused dissatisfaction to the Council, and the members adopted a resolution expressing regret that he should have made such charges against his brethren in the ministry. This was moved by Dr. Landels, of Edinburgh, seconded by the Rev. Edward Medley, and carried by forty-five votes to five.

Other issues arose from the controversy. Mr. Spurgeon had suggested to the deputation that the Baptist Union should adopt a creed similar to that

of the Evangelical Alliance. For the time being the controversy continued round this point—creed or no creed. At this stage Dr. Clifford showed strong fight. He expressed his deep abhorrence of anything in the shape of a creed when used as a punitive instrument. He shared, he said, in the most intense way possible everything like aversion to using terms in a double sense. He foreshadowed strenuous opposition to the employment even of a declaration if it committed any single individual to the use of terms in a double sense. He also wrote to a friend who in some respects favoured Mr. Spurgeon: “I have stated my mind again and again. I do not object to creeds as statements of belief (*credo*). I gave one when I joined the Church; repeated it or something like it when I entered College, restated it when I became a pastor, and have printed one, over and over again, in various books, Church reports, &c. It is not creeds as creeds; it is coercion through and by creeds I object to. See Galatians ii. 5.”

The special articles which he contributed to the *Pall Mall Gazette*—then under the editorship of Mr. Stead—ably and forcibly discussed the illogical position in which Baptists would be placed by adopting the creed proposed by Mr. Spurgeon. Dr. Clifford was willing that the Union should formulate a declaration of faith, and largely assisted in framing it. He would have nothing more. Thus when he came to the chair at the Spring Assembly, 1888, he faced the prospect of a battle-royal over the question

of "creed," *versus* "declaration." Dr. James Spurgeon, who had not retired with his brother from the Union, wished to propose the former and the Rev. Charles Williams the latter.

Ultimately the great debate which had aroused keen expectation amongst the whole of the Free Churches ended in a truce. This was largely due to the statesmanship of Dr. Spurgeon and Mr. Williams, combined with the tactful wisdom of Dr. Clifford. He smoothed away technical irregularities in Dr. Spurgeon's resolution and prevented points of order being raised, leaving the latter a free course.

Dr. Clifford had not the shadow of a personal feeling against Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Personalities did not enter into the contest. With him it was purely a defence of principles. He felt unmistakable regret that his friend, whom he loved, had become entangled in barren strife, but this feeling never restrained admiration for him whom he afterwards described as the "foremost preacher of Christendom," possessing "the true Puritan sense of the presence and greatness of God." Dr. James Spurgeon, who seemed to possess a broader vision of men and things than his brother, quite appreciated the Doctor's standpoint. He wrote to him in 1897: "I think that a volume containing the 'personal recollections of C. H. Spurgeon by his contemporaries' would help to fix for future times the personal estimate in which they held him. I should like all shades of Christian thought to be

given, and so I ask you, who knew him well, to give your personal recollections amongst others. I know you esteemed him, though you differed from him. But it is necessary that your standpoint should be represented. Hence my request. I know that to you it is a service of love to express such an opinion as faithfulness demands."

The death of Dr. James Spurgeon unfortunately frustrated this purpose.

One further incident of the Down Grade controversy may be given. On the Sunday previous to the momentous gathering in the City Temple on the Monday Dr. Parker offered the following large-hearted petition, which I am able to quote from a private copy in Dr. Clifford's possession :—

"Almighty God, in view of the meeting here of the Baptist Union, we beseech Thine especial blessing. Thou knowest the circumstances under which the assembly will gather ; Thou knowest the unrest, the pain, the fear, the gladness, and the joy which mingle on this occasion. Give Thy presiding servant wisdom and discretion ; may he know what Israel ought to do ; may his speech be seasoned as with salt ; may his heart burn with the love of God. And bless all who take part in the interesting and exciting discussion. May a spirit of love rule all ; may every one be quick to see the excellences of his brother, and may heart go out to heart in generous sympathy. Bless our friend Mr. Spurgeon ; we believe in his honesty and honour, integrity and steadfastness ; give

him largeness of view, clearness of perception, and may he do justice to the generosity of his own heart, which Thou hast made so large and grand. May there be no spirit of combativeness or contentiousness; may the spirit of clamour and debate and recrimination be banished from the place as all unholy things should be banished from the altar; and may man come to man in the spirit of the Son of Man; and whatever may become of creeds, may our faith continue to grow and hold dominion over us all. Bless all the communions that gather at the Cross. We have differences, but they are nothing to our unities; may we see that in Christ we have a common centre, a common salvation, and in the spirit of the Cross may we help one another every day we live. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our heavenly Father, the fellowship and communion of the Holy Ghost abide with all the Blood-bought Church. Amen."

That prayer was unmistakably answered.

Dr. Clifford chose as the subject for his President's address on this occasion "The Great Forty Years; or, The Primitive Christian Faith, its Real Substance and Best Defence"—truly a long title but a timely and weighty deliverance. The hour was momentous, and, as will be perceived, the subject bore directly upon the issues which later in the Assembly had to be decided. There were those amongst the delegates who tenaciously—with the zeal of a zealot—held to the orthodox presentation of Christianity. To run

counter to them might mean disaster to the Assembly as a whole. We know the Doctor as being loyal to truth as he conceives it, as well as courageous. With such a subject how was he then to reconcile his own conscience and obtain agreement from the consciences of his brethren?

The success of the address, however, may be gauged in a sentence. It made for peace. As a well-known Baptist wrote afterwards, "We are confident that it is a real eirenicon. The enthusiastic reception of it by the Assembly is proof that the pastors and delegates of the Baptist Union remain faithful to the gospel which Fuller demonstrated to be worthy of all acceptance."

"In a brief, poor sentence that only hints the essential fact it seems to me," the President said, "Christ shows the moral God victoriously dealing with immoral, sinful men. Jesus, the Son of God, on the cross gives the Christian conception of God in its most luminous, universal, human, and satisfying form. 'We preach,' said the most speculative, myriad-thoughted, and fine-spirited of the saints, receiving the Faith—'We preach Christ crucified, the wisdom of God'—*i.e.*, the philosophy of God, the revelation of His nature, the key to His administration of man's life and rule of souls. We preach Christ crucified; the Messiah, but crucified; the Son of Man, but crucified; the Son of God, but crucified; the holiest of the holy, but crucified; God in Christ, but in Christ crucified, humiliated, marred, broken, slain in

His war against sin, giving Himself to an escapable doom, choosing it in His love for man, giving Himself for our sins, not for His own, that He might deliver us from this present evil age with all its awful tyrannies of sin and the devil. God in His Son, His beloved Son, in Christ His essential self, atoning, reconciling the world unto Himself; restoring its ideal harmony; getting rid both of the love of sin and the guilt of it; identifying Himself with man in his saddest plight and sorest need; sorrowing and suffering for this wrong and so cleansing and making him anew; revealing his possibilities of righteousness and service. That is the beating heart of the 'Faith' of the 'Great Forty Years.'"

The autumn Assembly was held at Huddersfield, and here he took as the theme of his address "The New City of God; or, The Primitive Christian Faith as a Social Gospel." In this he pleaded eloquently with the Baptist Churches to realise their responsibilities in regard to the great social questions affecting the country as a whole. There had been neglect, but they must quicken the public conscience and like true Churches become a drilled company of Crusaders, a brotherhood in which every man had a weapon and a will to strike against the enemies of the human race—ignorance, drunkenness, debauchery, gambling, pestilence, and unbelief.

The year of his first presidency of the Union was altogether a stormy, strenuous period, a testing time, in fact, for strong men. The second presidency

which came altogether unexpectedly in 1899, proved an exceptionally happy period. The bitterness and jealousies of the previous decade had passed away. The Union, moreover, was just bracing itself for a joyful period of self-denial and pioneer work through its Twentieth Century Fund.

One of his first duties as President in 1899 was to address an open letter to the members of the Baptist Church throughout Great Britain and Ireland. "We are more than 350,000 strong," he said, "and we have yet to try the height to which we are capable of rising. The best yet remains to be done. 350,000 Baptists! I look at the figures with delight as I remember that every healthy and resolute Christian is a divine potency, carries the key to unlock human hearts, is a soul magnet in a world of souls to draw souls to the soul-saving Saviour. Let our aim be—*Each one at his best for God and men.* The spiritual really rules the world. Thought and love govern. Men are more than nations. . . . Now let us make each individual Church the best instrument men can get hold of for nourishing faith in God, reverence, conscience, hope, joy, courtesy, sympathy, and neighbourliness. . . . We are not the disciples of Schopenhauer, who taught that this is the worst of all possible worlds, but of Jesus Christ, who is saving the world, bad as it is, and shall finally triumph in His redeeming work. Brethren, let us be of good heart. The Lord will not fail us, and resting on Him, 'they can conquer who believe they can.' "

From the time that he assisted in inaugurating the Baptist Twentieth Century Fund by preaching a sermon at Northampton, until the concluding thanksgiving gathering in Bloomsbury Chapel, the Doctor laboured incessantly for the success of the Fund. Accompanied by the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., the secretary, who devoted himself to the successful issue of the task, he travelled in all parts of the kingdom, and by sermon, exhortation, and speech, stimulated the generosity of Baptist folk to a most encouraging extent.

A skilful Welsh pen supplies the following happy description of his appearance in Wales on behalf of the Fund :—

“ Dr. Clifford was the next speaker. On his going into the pulpit one of us rose on the platform, and cried aloud in the Doric to our countrymen to welcome him by rising. They leaped up as valorously as our own three regiments, and greeted him with a perfect storm of applause—long, loud, reiterated ; as generous as it was well-deserved, as real as it was spontaneous. Oh ! we are white men in Wales. We are good lovers and we are good haters, but we play the game ; and when a hero comes amongst us we give him a hero’s welcome. And the Derbyshire marvel stood there blushing and bowing his acknowledgments, as though he were a girl ; and when the greeting broke out again and again like fresh volleys of musketry, he folded his arms and beamed upon us through his

spectacles as much as to say : ' When you fellows are clothed and in your right mind, I've got something to say to you ; please be seated—I am only a very, very common man.' And he did speak to us. How he twitted us on being ' good Baptists—the ideal Baptists, the perfect Baptists, the only Baptists, the only people worth the name.' And how we laughed at his good-natured chaff and his mock irony ; and when he had proved to us from his own personal history, and various other apocryphal sources, that he was the only true Baptist left in that awful thing called the Baptist Union, he plunged into one of the grandest speeches I ever heard him deliver. . . . When he sat down the place was in a whirlwind."

When, in 1902, the quarter of a million was secured, Dr. Clifford shared in the felicitations of the occasion. It was an hour of intense joy and deep feeling never to be forgotten by those present. Old-fashioned Bloomsbury Chapel seemed on that spring morning as the very gate of Paradise. With almost overmastering emotion, and with the sob in the throat and tear in the voice, he said : " We have had some great times in the past, but there has never been anything equal to the experience of this morning. ' The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.' It is His doing, not ours. He is the inspirer and leader, and He has filled our hearts with rejoicing by the way in which He has crowned the effort in which we have been engaged with such glorious success. Not unto

us, not unto us, but unto Him be all the praise, now and for evermore."

Much space would be required to chronicle all his public appearances on Baptist platforms, and the numerous papers he has read or the addresses he has delivered. An assembly of the Baptist Union without him would be like home with a vacant chair. He bulks so largely in Baptists' affections that they expect him at all their gatherings. Since his present fight on the Education question he has more than ever endeared himself to them, and now when he comes on the Union platform they delight to give him a royal reception. On several occasions at Derby last autumn the delegates spontaneously rose *en masse* and cheered him vociferously. Perhaps some of these sentiments express the wish to wipe out the misconception and suspicion a few of them entertained towards him at the earlier part of his ministry, and which even expressed itself at his first election to the vice-presidency by a small but determined vote against him. Yet he is not the only man who has been misjudged.

As to his influence in Baptist Councils, let the secretary of the Baptist Union speak—and surely no one is more competent to express an opinion on the matter. "Another marked aspect of Dr. Clifford's character is his moderation," he says. "I have had numberless opportunities of seeing him in conference and committee on denominational and national questions, and it is my constant wish that

everybody was as easy to work with as he is. Where principle is concerned he is immovable. I have seen the fighting expression come upon his face, and the whole face set like adamant. I have seen the eager battle-look come into his eyes, as I remember seeing it kindle in the eyes of Mr. Gladstone, but he never mistakes method for principle, and is absolutely destitute of fads, crotchets and whims."

CHAPTER XII

THEOLOGY AND AUTHORSHIP

A WRITER who is not a theologian can scarcely attempt to criticise one who can justly lay claim to this branch of scholarship. I propose, therefore, to quote from Dr. Clifford's books or sermons three or four short extracts which will explain his theological position. This is at least necessary. A decade ago extremely orthodox Baptists seemed to delight in a tilt at him. Undoubtedly his view-point was not theirs, but they exhibited too much anxiety to label him with a heterodox label. After all there was only a handful of them, yet they voted against him, mercilessly criticised him in certain newspapers, and in other ways attempted to create within him much disquietude of spirit. They evidently wanted to place him under a cloud, so that his brethren might give him a wide berth, or treat him with suspicion. To them, theologically speaking, he was a suspect. The pin-pricks they managed to cause are now almost indescribable. George Eliot would have revelled in a description of their creed—which was minus all the

graces and charities of the Christian spirit—and its practical working.

Whether the world has grown wiser or they have become less pertinacious, theologians must decide. Certainly Dr. Clifford has not ceased to be liberal or broadminded. Now, as always, he dwells upon the “essentials” of Christianity, its vital truths and the clamant needs of the race. Even in his time Mr. Spurgeon, with the “Down Grade” full in view, gave the Doctor his Evangelical certificate. The present secretary of the Baptist Union, who is entitled to express an opinion, also says, “Dr. Clifford is profoundly and vitally evangelic.”

Before dealing with his theological standpoint, reference must be made to a peculiar method of attack adopted by the Rev. John Urquhart in 1889. The latter, in a two-column letter to the *Baptist*, preferred what he termed “specific accusations” of a Down Grade character against Dr. Clifford. A specimen of the matter and manner of this communication under the heading, “Dr. Clifford’s New Departure,” may be gleaned from the extract below :—

“Who can prove that Dr. Clifford has said any such thing? Well, Dr. Clifford will prove it. Has the reader noticed the statement of the problem at which the men who have his full approval have been working? They have been asking, he says, ‘How did the Bible grow, and what is its history?’ Theological professors used to busy themselves with the question ‘What saith the Scriptures?’ but these have got

beyond all that. They are now asking, 'What is the Scripture?' They have gone down to the foundations which we have so fondly believed to be more solid and enduring than the everlasting hills, and they have found them to be a wretched patchwork, mere bundles of conglomerate that give way at the slightest touch. In our ignorance we had imagined that the story of the Bible was a very simple one, that God gave it to men. There is an end to that delusion. The Bible is the product of the ages. It has sprung from the earth, and not descended from heaven. It has grown, and Professors Cheyne and Driver are now able to tell you when and how."

There were also other charges, some of which were either exaggerated or mis-stated, or concerning which he had no personal liability.

Mr. Urquhart's attack called forth sympathy for Dr. Clifford from many unexpected quarters. One of the foremost Evangelical ministers now living wrote him :—

"You must not think of withdrawing from association with a forward or any other movement, nor could we let you, for we need you and you need us. You must be brave and gentle and play the man, only anxious to be true to what you have learnt in the school of Christ concerning His gospel, and remembering how often men have failed to distinguish between disloyalty to truth and the unwonted novelty with which the truth may be stated."

An ex-president of the Baptist Union, who has now

passed away, characteristically urged him, "Do reply to Urquhart as you can with gentle tone, with cataract torrent, with burning indignation. He has done it in anticipation of Birmingham meetings. I dare not read 107 Psalm as I think of it. But do smash him."

Dr. Clifford did as he was desired, and completely exposed Mr. Urquhart's case. Probably no incident has occurred in the whole of his long ministry which distressed him to such an extent. It affected him deeply that such charges should be levelled against him in the columns of a denominational paper and on such flimsy premises. There seemed an attempt to proceed by "suggestion" and innuendo, and with this substratum build up indictments to convict him of utter disloyalty to his most cherished beliefs and professions.

His old tutor, the Rev. Dr. Underwood, wrote him : "Your *ἀπολογία* has not only relieved but enraptured me! Evidently there are some who wait for your halting. Their suspicions and censures are partly the penalties of popularity. But so long as the Lord is with you as the mighty One and a terrible, you are safe. Nor can any adversaries prevail who 'deal not wisely.' Yet you have need to be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. God forbid that I should sin in ceasing to pray for you."

Mr. Urquhart has since wisely refrained from further attacks upon Dr. Clifford.

The controversy largely increased his corre-

spondence, and many friends anxiously wrote him for a personal assurance of his position on certain aspects raised by Mr. Urquhart. To one who inquired as to his position concerning the Bible, he said, "I believe the Bible to be *throughout* true, inspired, and an infallible and all-sufficient guide to our faith and practice. This faith is mine from examination of the greater part of it, and I am willing to give to such parts as Solomon's Songs, which I have not yet examined, a confidence based on the results of my inquiries into, and experience of, the other parts."

But he has dealt with the Bible to a much fuller extent in his "Inspiration and Authority of the Bible," published by Messrs. James Clarke & Co. in 1892. It has passed through several editions, and circulated to a greater extent than any other of his larger volumes, besides winning much approval from competent critics. It was especially recommended to young men for its "straightforward honesty, its close reasoning, and its clear and vigorous style." He gave reasons for the "scientific" study of the Bible, and his own scientific training largely assisted him in this direction.

"We must study the contents of the Bible," he says, "in the same way as we do those of any book, say Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' or Tyndall on 'Heat,' or Green's 'History of the English People,' with (*a*) the same resolute detachment of mind; (*b*) the same readiness to defer to rightful authority; (*c*) the same

use of the best tools which can be had; (*d*) the same strong sympathy with the subject on which the writers treat, the spirit they breathe, and the purpose they seek to realise. 'Men spake or wrote the "Scriptures" as they were moved by the Holy Ghost'; but they were *men*, and their words can only be accurately explained and fully understood as the ordinary, literary, textual, and critical methods of study are faithfully applied. For us the Revelation is in an English earthen vessel, and we must derive the contents of the vessel by the same processes we use with Milton's poems, Tyndall's science, or Green's story of our ancestors."

At some length he discussed how we are to know whether the Bible is authoritative, and proceeded to take scientific analogies for the purpose.

"Why, then, let us ask, do I believe in the teachings of sciences such as chemistry or geology? Clearly because these sciences embrace facts which I can inspect and test for myself, set in the order of their sequence, trace their causation, and arrive at their governing law, and so be compelled to certain beliefs. I wish to know whether fire burns, or a wall resists, or oxygen supports life: the fire burns my finger, and I believe; the wall repels a blow, and again I believe; oxygen quickens the pulse, and once more I believe. It is the *truth* of the sciences that forms their right and power to compel belief.

"Again, why do I believe that the constituent

elements of the planets, and stars, and suns are the same as those of the earth on which we live? I cannot go far in personal investigation of the stellar worlds. I am unable to come within the sweep of the facts themselves in their entire range of evidence ; but trained men of science report the results of their experiments, and as I read or hear them I am compelled by the scientific character of a Kirchoff or a Lockyer to accept the conclusions of these authoritative witnesses on stellar chemistry. In this case my belief is due to the authoritative or belief-coercing power of scientific men.

“Once more. I find in me a belief in the persistence of force, the reign of law, the existence of a luminiferous ether, the process called evolution, and similar truths ; and yet I cannot demonstrate them, and, in a real sense, they can scarcely be said to be demonstrable beyond all chance of doubt. Whence, then, comes this faith? I trace it to the common scientific consciousness, due in part to specific experiment and repeated verification of particular facts, in part to the organic unity of all scientific knowledge, and in part to those intuitions or necessary truths which are the base-rock of all our reasoning. Thus in these three typical experiences the right and power to compel belief is (1) in the truth itself ; (2) in the witness of true and trained men on subjects of which they are masters ; (3) in the common consciousness of those sections of mankind specially experienced in the truths believed.

Upon this basis he deals with the three points concerning the Bible, and says:—

1. "The authority of the Bible, like the authority of chemistry, is in intrinsic truth.

2. "The authority of the Bible brings us face to face with a succession of authoritative men, who have set forth the truths of Scripture in the splendour of their life, and represented the power of Christ over their wills and in their service.

3. "The element of truth at the heart of this appeal to the Church is the fact that the general experience of Christian men comes in to confirm the individual faith, to correct its errors, enlarge its narrowness, and broaden its catholicity; so these writings are not only themselves part of that great spiritual order which has appeared in the world, and still appears, but they are perpetually receiving the witness to their truth and power borne by the experience of 'the holy Church throughout the world,' and thereby they hold supreme sway in the best life of mankind."

"The crowning certainty is secured through these forces by the work of God in the spirit of man."

Though critics may analyse the Bible and reject certain Old Testament portions, yet, he says, this does not affect the Gospel, for the Christianity of Christ Jesus is "absolutely independent of the findings of scholars as to the authorship of particular books" or other literary points, and that after all "Jesus is the final test of the morality, and also of the doctrinal teaching of the Old Testament."

On another occasion he has expressed his views of the Bible on more general lines. "The Bible," he says, "is not itself a fountain of life. Nay, it may, like a dusty old manuscript, get into the pipe which connects us with the fountain and stop the flow. Readers may put it in the place of religion instead of using it to quicken spiritual life; and those very leaves that once throbbed and glowed with the Holy Ghost, may choke up the trumpet along which God Himself would speak to us. He is the living preacher who makes His hearers feel that no being is so real as God, no help so real, no love so warm, and no holiness so spotless as His; and he is the wise reader of the Book of God who reads every word as a direct message from the Father to His needy child."

In his presidential address at Burnley to the General Baptist Conference, when he chose the subject, "The Coming Theology; or, the Primitive Christian faith; the source and basis of a living and progressive Christian theology," he dealt with the "return to Christ, in History and in Idea, in Person and Sway as 'all, and in all'; our primary means of surely knowing God, interpreting and defining Him. Whilst modestly recognising the limits of human knowledge, the Coming Theology will," he continued, "strenuously assert His authority. and revive the Hebrew awe, insist on the elimination of all that is arbitrary and fitful in His rule; affirm the universality of reason, law, order,

holiness, and maintain that His administration is from first to last redemptive, renewing, educational, and disciplinary, and that, therefore, man's chief end is to glorify God and fully to enjoy Him for ever. It will treat His elections as preparations for expansion and means of progress. It will regard the Bible, as the revelation of His history, written in the literature of a people, and whilst full of His inspiration, and finally authoritative as to faith and duty, yet marked by the limitation incident to the condition of its creation. It will simplify and unify the Churches, making them Congregational in government, catholic in sympathy, federated in work, averse to sacerdotalism as anti-Christian, ashamed of all that is unjust, and therefore refusing the patronage and control of the State. It will not lose sight of the individual, but it will strongly assert the solid oneness of all nations and races; the brotherhood of all men. Politics will be religious. The 'secular' will be banished by being spiritualised. Women and children will have their rights restored. Men will be taught to look upon the 'necessities' of the world as a common stock in which they are partners, and the work of the world as their privilege. It will insist upon retribution here and there, in this state and the next, but it will rectify the defect of this state by proclaiming the hopes of a vision of the full manifestation of God in Christ for all those who have not had that highest human privilege here. It will, we may surely expect, be sweet in temper,

kindly in tone, and courteous in debate, and teach, and practise as well as teach, that the greatest thing in the world is love."

His views on the Atonement have been misunderstood—or perhaps, more accurately, not carefully considered—by some, but as we have shown, Spurgeon was not of this number. Dr. Clifford does not use the stereotyped phrases of some theologians. He prefers more scientific terms. But it would be absurd to suppose that he was disloyal to fundamental truth on that account. After all the man who misinterprets is he who only superficially understands Dr. Clifford's life and teaching.

Speaking of the Atonement, he says, "The sacrifice and work of Christ create in the human soul the conditions which vindicate and justify forgiveness, initiate new relations, and guarantee moral recovery and renewal. The forgiveness of sins does not extinguish the results of sins; but it effects a change of relation in the sinner to God, from opposition and rebellion to trust and devotion, and sets at work instantly those spiritual forces which effectively counterwork the consequences of having occupied a wrong relation to God, which tend to destroy such effects altogether as causes, and to produce the new manhood set forth in Christ Jesus. Man does not save himself. He owes his salvation to God through His Son; to the whole God manifested in the Son; to the love of God shown in the vicarious suffering borne for us, that is, for our welfare, which

is personal righteousness and personal love ; the two being one and making a living whole ; the righteousness without the love being hard, severe, and unjust, and the love apart from the righteousness becoming mere impotent and vapouring sentiment. All is thus spiritual, ethical, and divine, and all is victorious. God is satisfied, for sin is vanquished and righteousness reigns. God is satisfied, for the sinner He yearned to save is delivered from the dominion of evil, and in his freedom dedicates himself in passionate devotion to His service. And if God is satisfied, all is right with the world, and will one day be right with our theologies.

“This ‘theory’ may not explain everything, but it places us in such a position that we may put our trust in Christ as Revealer of the Father and Saviour of men, without any affront to our intelligence, and with the full assurance that in trustful devotion to Christ we are in possession of the life that is life indeed.”

The foregoing passage is taken from a sermon on the “Theories of the Atonement,” preached at Westbourne Park, September 9, 1894, with reference to an article on “True and False Conceptions of the Atonement” by Mr. Gladstone in the *Nineteenth Century*. Dr. Clifford took as his text John iii. 16: “God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life.” He closed his discourse with the following appeal: “Brothers,

children of the Eternal Father, I entreat you to accept this infallible message. Judge all others by it. God loves you and gives you His Son. Trust Him wholly; take your thoughts of His ways from Him—from His sufferings for your redemption. Welcome His forgiveness. It is free and full. Enter upon His gracious and chastening training for the perfect life of the sons of God. It is heaven here and hereafter. It is eternal life."

On the spiritual and ethical side of Christ's teaching, he is both frank and enthusiastic as he says—

"I bear my own testimony, and I assert this: and if ever I have been in any moral difficulty, if I have had any spiritual or ethical crisis to face, if I have come to a point where the roads of life have diverged and I have been compelled to ask, Which way must I take? I have never appealed to the teaching of Jesus Christ in vain. Not once: and I have had some crises. A man may bear his witness on questions like this. The teaching of Jesus is so clear to me, the mists are so thoroughly lifted from His moral ideas, the clouds are so far above the spiritual instructions which He imparts, that I have not had the slightest hesitation in knowing what He wants done. My difficulty has always been in doing what He wants done. The nebulousity is not in the teaching; the impracticability appears to be in the man. He tells me that I am to lend, hoping for nothing again. I don't find that easy—I can't get on very well with that sort of instruction. He says that if a man hits

me on one side of the face I am to turn to him the other. Not an easy business! He says I am to love my enemies—the man who has hurt me, who has thrust his knife through me, and would have ruined my happiness and my usefulness; and I am to pray for him. I have tried to do it, and, thanks be to God, I have been able to do it—but through His all-sustaining grace, and through the assurance that Christ's teaching couldn't be wrong, and if only I followed it, I must find blessedness."

Upon the question of the "Larger Hope," he says:—

"I have never been able to do more than hope for a hope. I have no *belief* in it. I distinguish between a hope and a belief. Leaving the Bible out of the question altogether, I am incapable of obtaining a well-reasoned belief in the soundness of the doctrine of the Larger Hope. Revelation gives no logical basis for such a theory. The tendency of character to permanence is an insuperable obstacle to my acceptance of the position. I do not think the New Testament gives us material adequate for the determination of the question of the exact duration of future punishment. I hold this position very strongly and have maintained it again and again."

In somewhat fuller explanation of this attitude his reply to a recent interviewer should be quoted:—

"So far as my own ministry is concerned, I deal very slightly with that aspect of matters. I think it much more important to show the permanence of

character, and to indicate that every deed is itself not simply an effect, but that it becomes a cause, and that according to its character so is the effect that it produces. Hence, it is extremely perilous for men to place any trust upon the expectation of some sudden break in the links of causation. Their trust should be placed solely upon what is called in the Bible 'repentance,' a change of thought, of view, of purpose, of will, which is simply a longer way of saying should be placed upon faith. I speak of myself, mark you—I shrink from judging any other minister, never have done it, and will not do it; but I shrink myself from giving the slightest encouragement to men to expect that they may get through death what they cannot get here, and at once, through a changed attitude of will towards God themselves."

Of his denominational theology it may be stated that he is a convinced Baptist, as in Church polity and order he pronounces in favour of Congregationalism. If without sacrificing principles as a Baptist, union could be accomplished with Congregationalists, he would hail the linking together of two branches of the same family with intense satisfaction. On more than one occasion he has spoken to this effect at Interdenominational Conferences.

II.

Much of his theology is contained in his books, which are in many cases series of sermons, as for instance, "Is Life worth Living?" "Daily Strength

for Daily Living," "Typical Christian Leaders," "Christian Certainties," and "The Secret of Jesus."

On his return from his trip round the world, he collected a series of letters which had appeared in the *Christian World*, and these were issued under the general title, "God's Greater Britain," by Messrs. James Clarke & Co.

Reference has already been made to the "Inspiration and Authority of the Bible," which has gone into several editions and is now in its tenth thousand—an evidence at least that its scope and treatment have assisted numbers of readers to obtain a clear and reverent idea of the authority of the Bible.

In addition, leading articles for the *Christian World* and *Freeman*, contributions to the *Contemporary Review*, *Times*, *Daily Chronicle*, and *Daily News*, and scores of pamphlets have issued from his pen on subjects principally relating to Free Church principles, education, temperance, social problems, and kindred topics.

Every page that he has written bears the impress of strenuous moral purpose, high endeavour to prove of service amidst the mazes of theological opinion, or burning desire to right the wrong of social injustice and inequality.

But for the claims of education he might have found time for larger and more important literary work. He has not only the desire but on several occasions the opportunity has been his, and has been refused only because he could not lay down his sword for the pen.

CHAPTER XIII

SOCIAL AND PHILANTHROPIC SERVICES

IN the preceding pages, as well as those which follow, the description of Dr. Clifford's services on behalf of great causes is primarily intended as explanation of his life-work—not as mere personal eulogy—and secondly as illustrative of the cause itself. In this spirit we deal with efforts on behalf of Temperance, Purity, the Housing Question, Arbitration, Armenian and Macedonian relief, and a "Living Wage." We must remember that he stood for this "social gospel" when the Churches opposed it with persistence and even vehemence. Then those who maintained it were regarded as hot-headed revolutionists. He himself realised the truth of Emerson's words, "All the newspapers, all the tongues of to-day will, of course, at first defame what is noble ; but you who hold not of to-day, not of the times, but of the everlasting, are to stand for it ; and the highest compliment man ever receives from Heaven, is the sending to him its disguised and discredited angels."

One rejoices to see the position entirely changed to-day. He never receded. The Churches have changed. Learning wisdom, they have come up to him by recognising the clamant needs of the hour.

In these social questions he occupied amongst the Baptists a similar position to Hugh Price Hughes amongst the Wesleyans. They had indeed much in common, and in the Purity Crusade, the "Living Wage" movement, and the Peace propaganda following upon the Tsar's message, stood shoulder to shoulder. Mr. Hughes said at the time of the Dock Strike, that "as a Protestant and Nonconformist, inheriting the noblest traditions of freedom and progress, he was ashamed that they had allowed a Cardinal of the Church of Rome to be before them in the service of the poor." Those were exactly Dr. Clifford's sentiments.

As a life abstainer he goes the whole length of Temperance reform, and is strongly opposed to any policy of compensation. When at College he joined the United Kingdom Alliance, was a thorough supporter of local option, and engaged in direct Temperance work. Since that time he has taken the chair for the Alliance at one of its magnificent annual meetings held in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, and assisted it in other direct work. Mr. Chamberlain once said, "A priest-ridden nation is very much to be pitied, a publican-ridden nation is very much to be despised. We look forward to the time when a political party shall proclaim war to the knife

against this swollen tyranny." Mr. Chamberlain may turn his back on such sentiments now, but not so Dr. Clifford. He quotes the saying, and declares war against the "Trade" and its manifold dire influences. As Free Churchmen he claims their first duty must be to prevent any suspension of the functions enabling magistrates to inquire into the needs of a district with the object of closing public-houses where requirements are more than met, or for refusing licenses where provision is amply sufficient for the neighbourhood.

As typical of the services rendered the Temperance cause, it may be mentioned that he preached the annual sermon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1877 on behalf of the National Temperance League, and similarly the sermon for the Congregational Total Abstinence Association in 1890.

When Mr. Stead commenced his revelations in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the Churches again hesitated whether they should support his campaign for social purity. There were two men who recognised the danger but did not flinch—John Clifford and Hugh Price Hughes. Even when "that good man Stead," as Carlyle called him, was imprisoned, the former visited him at Coldbath Fields. The issues raised by the propaganda which followed induced Dr. Clifford to consider the position of young women in Paddington.

"In our Church," he wrote to one of his friends at the time, "we are trying to create argument; the

argument of *fact*, to grow *logic*, demonstrating the work of the Church for *purity*, for the elevation of women. It is a serious indictment of the Church that it has been so laggard in occupying the same position towards woman that Christ did. I want to make it manifest that the Christian Society has to 'fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ' for degraded, lost women. We have started, but the work is preternaturally difficult. Still, if we will work up to the point of dying for it, we shall win. There is a Resurrection for every man and society that will die for the causes that will bless and save the coming generations."

As a practical outcome, his Church decided in 1885 to establish a house for the temporary accommodation of young women and girls of good character, who from various circumstances, such as the sudden loss of a situation, found themselves without a respectable home. In appealing for the necessary funds—£250 for furniture and preliminaries, and £200 for the first year's maintenance—Dr. Clifford pointed out that it was not uncommon for young women to be dismissed from their situations without previous notice of any kind, and often without lengthened notice. If they were without friends in that vast city, infested with evil tempters, it was obvious they were in imminent peril. To give shelter for a few nights to those exposed in that way was one of the most needful forms of "preventive work" the Christian Church could undertake.

In this effort he was generously assisted by Mr. E. Cayford, J.P., who during forty years has proved one of the most valued Church officers at Westbourne Park. The Westbourne Home for Servants, under the superintendence of Mr. and Mrs. John Ryan, and with Miss Herring as matron, still remains an important branch of work, and during its nineteen years' existence has afforded abundant evidence of its practical use.

In addition he was associated with Mr. Stead and Mrs. Josephine Butler in the campaign against the infamous Contagious Diseases' Acts, besides serving as a member of the Council for the Promotion of Public Morality, of which the Bishop of London was president, and Bishop Barry chairman of the organising committee.

"Hold prayer-meetings by all means," he says, "but don't forget to build artisan dwellings as well." This sentiment prompts his presidency of the Christian Social Brotherhood—equivalent to the Christian Social Union of the Anglican Church. The latter, under the leadership of Bishop Gore and Canon Scott Holland, keeps distinctly sectarian. Therefore the Christian Social Brotherhood came into being as an agency for promoting co-operation in social service amongst the Free Churches. It supplies preachers and lecturers to arouse the conscience of the Churches to the conditions of the poor in large towns with the hope of securing hearty co-operation in improving their lot. The keynote of the Brother-

hood is the belief that the Christian life is more than working for one's personal good. Rather is it working with God for the regeneration of the world. This service distinctly appeals to Dr. Clifford, and he rarely misses an opportunity of enforcing its truths before large assemblies when social questions are under discussion.

As to improved dwellings, he has pressed this point home to the Free Churches on several occasions. His address before the National Free Church Council at Bradford is mentioned in detail in Chapter XVI. The awful facts concerning life in the slums at Kentish Town, of which he is personally acquainted, have burnt themselves upon his soul, compelling constant advocacy of improved dwellings for the industrious poor. Those who know anything of London appreciate the bitter situation. Against all his better feelings, the artisan is in numberless cases compelled to herd his family in one room, because of the exorbitant rents and the locality of his work. With especial emphasis this applies to the skilled labourer, who dares not afford the luxury of living in the suburbs, and though he earns a proportionately high wage, a large portion—often a third—goes for rent. Already the London County Council have achieved surprising results in their housing schemes, and for this reason have enlisted the enthusiastic support and sympathy of the Doctor.

Many ministers are inclined to view all labour movements with suspicion. A natural timidity,

induced oftentimes by fear of a wealthy employer in the congregation, prevents them from studying these problems. Then, again, they do not understand the working man. They take the capitalists' view that he is a lazy, greedy, grasping fellow, worked as a puppet by the Trade Unions. Even his best friends admit his imperfections. Mr. John Burns, M.P., in this respect hath excelled all. But there is this difference. He is toiling on the London County Council and in Parliament to better their social condition. Dr. Clifford's position is very analogous. He does not raise class interests. Only he says let us treat employer and employed alike. Our Churches were not made for one class before another. Moreover, his upbringing has permitted him an insight into the life of the artisan and labourer not often accorded to the ministerial class. The latter usually take their views from the outside. Fortunately he can see the workmen from within. Hence his deep and practical sympathy with the dockers in their prolonged struggle for the "tanner," with the miners for a "living wage," and with the Bethesda quarrymen in their strike against arbitrary management and the revival of feudal serfdom.

He has always been a friend of working men. They know it and appreciate him accordingly. I have seen in the Midlands nearly a thousand men in their breakfast-hour listen attentively, not to a rousing political speech, but to an inspiring gospel message delivered with simplicity, earnestness, and even

entreaty. One could not fail to note the bond of sympathy between speaker and hearers. They seemed to recognise him as of their own stock and blood. On such occasions he often reveals autobiographical incidents which appeal instinctively and directly to them.

Surrounded at Paddington with large business houses employing hundreds of young people, he appreciates the conditions under which the ordinary shop-assistant lives. He knows the barrenness of the "living-in" system, and has not hesitated to proclaim against it. In smaller establishments, where home-like comforts are not forgotten, and where the assistant belongs to a large family, there are many advantages, both to employer and assistant. But in other cases the establishment frequently becomes simply a kind of barracks, where the food is indifferent, comforts *nil*, and where an objectionable rule is adopted of locking out young women, as well as young men, all the Sunday. These are facts which have illustrated his arguments, and which have been obtained from many of his own congregation, for quite an encouraging number of shop-assistants attend his ministry and the agencies in connection therewith.

A murmured cry from persecuted Stundists, a wail of agony from harassed Armenians and Macedonians whose mothers and sisters have been dishonoured or butchered by the vile Turk, or a moan from the poor natives in the Congo State illtreated by dia-

bolical traders, all alike reach his ear. He may be busy—has he ever been otherwise?—over public questions of great moment. Still, “truce with oppression, never, oh ! never !” and with voice and pen he endeavours to stir his countrymen’s conscience. Perpetually over-worked, he yet manages somehow to serve on Relief Committees, write letters, or speak at public gatherings.

One ought to note the care with which he prepares his case in such instances. Just one example. At the 1903 Spring Assembly of the Baptist Union he moved a resolution upon the shocking atrocities perpetrated upon the Congo natives. In a Baptist gathering this was naturally a delicate subject. Bloomsbury Chapel was crowded, and every delegate present knew the difficulties which beset the speaker. Yet he completely triumphed over them. With scrupulous care he had collected his facts first hand, and gave such a statement that his case was incontrovertible. Without the shadow of a difference the resolution was carried unanimously and enthusiastically. Probably no action would have been taken had he not entered the lists. This is but a sample of the chivalrous courage which appeals so forcibly to friends and even fair-minded opponents.

In the Peace Crusade—the climax of Mr. Stead’s remarkable tour through Europe following after the Tsar’s Rescript—Dr. Clifford took a prominent share. Mr. Stead has generally managed to secure him as an ally in humanitarian efforts. In all, two hundred

meetings, in many cases town gatherings, were held, at which resolutions were unanimously approved. An unparalleled response was also made by men and women of all shades of opinion to the appeal for signatures. Then as a fitting termination the pulpits of the land pleaded "for the sword to be turned into the pruning hook," and few more eloquently than the preacher at Westbourne Park.

Again, Anglo-American arbitration has proved one of his favourite themes. In 1896, with eloquent pen, he urged that after facing a great peril over the Venezuelan incident, the duty of Englishmen and Americans was to see that such a crisis was never again reached. They were one with America in blood, legal traditions, besides possessing a common history. Their heroes were the same. Washington and Cromwell were akin. The ideas that ruled England were the same in America—the ideas of justice, liberty, and brotherhood. They owed it to one another as Christian nations to displace the "ethics of enmity" and of war by the "ethics of amity" and industrialism. It was a debt due to the individual citizen of each country, for the standard of national morality lowered or heightened that of private morality. The purer and nobler their legislative ideal, the loftier and stronger the individual ethics. Above all, they owed it to the world. It would consolidate the Anglo-Saxon people and go far to lift the law, "Thou shalt do no murder," to its true place in the jurisprudence of the nations of the earth.

It is but a truism that so many social reformers and philanthropists have failed because they attempted only to improve the man's surroundings and not the man himself. More than thirty years ago I find that Dr. Clifford observed : " To put a roof over the houseless, to clothe the perishing, to feed the hungry, are necessary and important ; but to rouse the slumbering heart, to minister sympathy and tenderness, is far nobler and more serviceable. To get a man on in the world is much, but to refine his imagination, purify his tastes, make him loathe dirt, open his eyes to the sealed books of heaven and earth, to lead him to God, to ' save his soul,' is infinitely more. Our work is not merely to feed and clothe, but to mend the marred man, make him thrifty and provident."

"It takes a soul
To move a body ; it takes a high-souled man
To move the masses . . . even to a cleaner sty.
It takes an ideal to blow an inch aside
The dust of the actual : and your Fouriers failed,
Because not poets enough to understand
That life develops from within."

Briefly let me add that he has been President of the Sunday School Teachers' Chatauqua, and an enthusiastic worker both in the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour and on behalf of P.S.A.'s.

CHAPTER XIV

A POLITICAL DISSENTER

I.

THIS term has no terrors for Dr. Clifford. Nor has the "Saturday Reviewer," who, commenting on his statement that "politics were but applied Christianity," snorted, "His politics, for aught we know, may be applied Cliffordianity." We appreciate differently, and quote Mr. John Morley's words concerning Mr. Gladstone: "Political life was only part of his religious life."

From Dr. Clifford's student days he has cherished a passionate conviction against the folly of "leaving human wrongs to right themselves." To him a minister is a complete man, with responsibilities for the ennobling of his neighbour's whole life. He believes that the "quest of heavenly sanctity" (as Martineau argues) is not "another kind of business, prescribing occupations almost perfectly distinct" from the ordinary everyday life, but takes the seeker through the world's mart, its controversies, and the polling-booth. His "quest" could only be

crowned with complete success according to the gallant way in which he bore himself amidst these encounters. He would be "more able to endure, as more exposed to suffering and distress." Many good men hold the opposite view, and are content "to pass into the silent life," but for fifty years Dr. Clifford has valiantly maintained his place as a "political Dissenter." Nor can we wish him otherwise.

On one occasion he sought to enlist the sympathies of a well-known and popular brother minister on behalf of a political propaganda, and received the following reply: "My dear Dr. Clifford, I am glad to see your handwriting and read your characteristic letter. I accept every word of it in the same spirit in which I know it is written, but, believe me, I could with equal sincerity 'implore' you to have nothing to do with the election, beyond, as a private citizen, giving your vote. I could 'plead with you' to limit all your powers to the direct work of opening up the Scriptures and seeking to save the perishing. In my judgment, the minister of Christ is outside the God-given sphere of service when he enters any secular arena. With all my heart I wish that dear Dr. Clifford were only known as the preacher of Jesus Christ."

Dr. Clifford replies generally to all such opinions by admitting in the first case that the "atmosphere of a contested election seems altogether unfavourable to the realisation of the high ideals of Christian men. But," he adds, "the more hazardous the duty, the more imperative the demand for robust courage and

saintly fortitude. If the prevalent conception of the State is debased and worldly, Christian men must heighten and purify it; for 'the powers that be are ordained of God.' Government is His will. The State is as really a divine creation as the Church; and if men are blind to its divinity, and treat it as though it were the offspring of Satan and the fit tool for his work, then it is our business as sons of God to witness for Him and His ideals in the corporate life of man, and work at and in the State until it is made the effective organ for the establishment of His kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost upon the earth. Therefore the New Testament Christian will go to the polling-booth as he goes to the prayer-meeting, and work in the election room in the same spirit of subordination to the will of God as he teaches in the Sunday School or directs Church affairs in the diaconate; excepting that his sense of responsibility for his judgment, temper, speech, and vote will be intensely quickened by the recollection that he is shaping issues, religious and social, not only for tens of thousands, but for hundreds of millions of his fellow-men."

This teaching directly accords with that of Dr. Dale, who so completely lived up to his ideal. "Of all secular affairs," said the latter, "politics, rightly considered, are amongst the most unworldly, inasmuch as the man who is devoted to political life ought to be seeking no personal and private good. The true political spirit is the mind that was in

Christ Jesus, who 'looked not on His own things, but also on the things of others.'"

But Dr. Clifford's vocation has never been forgotten. Politics have not claimed him entirely and engrossingly. The caucus has not bound him to its wheels. His soul is above the machinery. Nor have the so-called rewards and attractions of political life enticed him from the pastor's office as with some men. We say not a word in criticism. To their own conscience they stand or fall. But it is evident that when they enter Parliament their first vocation takes second place.

In 1885 he wrote to a friend concerning the attempt made by Paddington politicians to induce him to contest the division in the Liberal interest. "I know you like a joke," he remarked. "What think you? I have been seriously pressed by several friends to become candidate for one part of Paddington! They tell me they will find the money, &c., that I am the man, &c., &c. All the customary palaver. I laugh, and say, 'This will never do!' Few men more thoroughly believe in the duty of being *political*, but that is altogether different from being or trying to be an M.P."

A few months later he wrote: "The Parliamentary idea has gone! I am told all round my return was certain; and I may tell *you* that the breath of human interest, the intense practicality, and the fine possibilities of service in Parliamentary life fascinated me strongly; but my *vocation* is that of a religious

teacher, and by it I *stand* for this present, doing in it what I can in a brief life and with limited faculty to help my fellows in the highest ranges of their experience, and feeling sometimes with unbearable agony who, oh! who is sufficient for these things! but rejoicingly compelled to say, my sufficiency is of God."

Thirteen years previously, under somewhat similar circumstances, Dr. Dale was pressed to enter Parliament. Writing to Mr. Henry Richard, who had himself forsaken his early office—and in his case with complete success—he said: "Your kind words about my attempting to find my way into the House at the next election raise a question which has been raised several times by some of my friends during the last three or four years. Happily the question is not a practical one for me. I am quite clear that Parliamentary life would be absolutely inconsistent with the doing of my ministerial work, and unless the impression which I have sometimes had of my unfitness for ministerial work became deeper, I could not see my way to giving it up."

But a few months since Dr. Clifford was again pressed in many influential quarters—both Free Church and political—to occupy a seat in Parliament. So universally was it repeated that many people imagined he had consented, and weaved pros and cons around the statement. When personally challenged he unequivocally repeated in effect his earlier answer. I have had two or three opportunities of discussing this question with him, and

his reply has always been definite. "I feel," he said, "that if I were to give up the ministry I should not be true to the higher vocation. I am fearful also that if I entered Parliament I should be materialised by my surroundings. The convention of the House would, I believe, rob any influence which I might possess of its effectiveness. No!"—this with emphasis—"I think I can best serve the cause I have at heart by remaining outside the House of Commons."

When Dale saw the treatment of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh by a majority of the House, and "the profanation of the most sacred elements of the Christian faith for the purposes of party warfare," he expressed regret that he was not in Parliament. As Dr. Clifford from the Distinguished Stranger's Gallery witnessed night after night the struggles of the gallant band of Liberals, so sparsely supported by the more official element, to resist the forces of reaction in the Education Bill, he undoubtedly longed to possess the floor of the House for one brief hour. Who will deny that if he had had the right of speech there his irresistible oratory, flowing periods, and sledge-hammer arguments would have largely assisted the Commons to recover some of its lost charm of piquant personality and high-toned address?

II.

Yes! John Clifford is a politician, but first a patriot.

Take his attitude on the question of the South African war. In this he was opposed to the majority of his countrymen as well as many of his own friends. Fortunately one can now speak about the matter from this side without the unpleasant consequences which seemed inevitable in 1900. Then John Bull became madly intoxicated with the spirit of rabid Imperialism. He disliked arguments, and preferred peacock's feathers for himself and abuse for his friends.

Dr. Clifford wrote to a friend in 1901: "This last has been the saddest year of my life! I feel older than ever I did! I can enter into the heart-anguish of Jeremiah as I never could before. My soul has been indescribably afflicted for my country, for my own people! Oh! that England should have fallen so low! I can scarcely believe it! Most of my own people at Westbourne Park and many brave souls throughout our denomination have stood true to justice and brotherhood and humanity. But at Westbourne Park we had to have the police for three nights, because the rowdies had threatened the building. Without *our* solicitation the police authorities sent a body of detectives. Strange to say, on the first night of the threatened attack I was, by an arrangement some months old, preaching in another part of London, and so we escaped; but the Liberal and Radical Club close by was smashed, and something like a riot started.

"The worst aspect of this matter is the revelation

it makes of the condition of the country. When a nation blunders as ours has done the last five years it is evident there is a deterioration of moral fibre, a depraving of the conscience, a blinding of the judgment that must lead to further disaster. The forecast cannot be one that omits penalty and doom! The eternal laws will not be defied. Suffering is at the doors. Judgment will take the nation to school and teach us as nothing else will.

"The difficulty is to determine what is best to be done! Slowly but surely events are changing the judgments of men on most of the topics on which such false and premature opinions were formed last year. The Boer is a 'new creature' in the British imagination already, and the full revelation of his character has not yet been given. The theory of a Boer conspiracy preceding the Jameson Raid is dead as a nail, and will be flung aside soon. The cry of help for the 'native' is felt to be as hypocritical and hollow as any that ever led to mischief. John Bull will steal again, and the Churches will bless his theft! He will begin to talk about justly administering what he has unjustly taken, and to attempt to atone for what he has so unjustly done.

"By 1905 we can, if we will, stop the 'set' of Britain towards decay, lift it to a higher plane, and start the old land once more on a career of 'liberty, equality, and fraternity.' It is a great task, but it can be wrought out. The manhood is in the nation

still, and though, like Memnon's statue, seemingly dark and dead, yet when struck by the genius of the new time a sweeter and diviner music will fill the air. This at least is the hope of yours always and always faithfully, J. CLIFFORD."

The optimism then displayed does not now appear misplaced. Six months later he was writing again on the same subject :—

"Politicians say things are worse now than on December 24, 1899. They are bad enough, no doubt! The Government is itself alarmed about South Africa, and reflective men see the crippled condition in which we enter into the competition of the nations for territorial extension with many misgivings. But if we look deeper I think we can detect signs that we are forming a more just estimate of ourselves, and are becoming acquiescent in the utter hopelessness of any effort of ours to rival the European peoples in the foolish race for military greatness. We shall be able to beat back 'conscription,' and to fix attention on the qualities of character that give stability and abiding strength to the nation. I have no doubt that Time, which tells all, will report that December 24, 1900, registered a real advance in national well-being as compared with twelve months before. It has been a sad, a miserable time; but a salutary experience."

The personal danger in public speech did not hinder his own expression, and he found many opportunities of unburdening his soul upon what

he conceived to be the iniquity of an unjust war. But leaving these utterances, let us briefly consider his efforts to promote a desire for peace amongst Free Churchmen without reference to individual opinions upon the war itself.

Those present at the Conference of London ministers held in the Memorial Hall, July 12, 1901, will remember the long and occasionally excited discussion which prevailed for two hours whilst those present determined "whether it is yet possible to focus conviction on a constructive policy of peace." The scene revealed the extent to which the war had divided Free Churchmen and the consequent difficulty to secure agreement concerning the question of the terms of peace to be offered to the Boers. Surely Dr. Clifford never waited more patiently for his brethren to come into line than on this occasion, and at the adjourned meeting the following week. Essentially a hard hitter, the Conference illustrated another side of his character in the diligent care with which he strove to find a common platform for all.

Primarily the meeting was called by the Christian Social Brotherhood, who first sought Dr. Clifford's assistance in evolving a starting-point for a "constructive policy of peace." The latter formulated six points of suggested agreement which were embodied in the letter convening the meeting as follows:—

1. The immediate surrender of arms and all military organisation.

2. An amnesty without limit and without qualification, save that specified.

3. The Federation of the States of South Africa on the lines of Australia and Canada.

4. Self-government for each State, like that of Manitoba or New South Wales, *i.e.*, without any diplomatic relations with foreign States, except through the Federation, and no military arrangements, except under the control of the Parliament of the Federation.

5. "Equal rights for all white races," the franchise to be settled by the Federal authority, and to be the same throughout the Commonwealth.

6. The natives to be protected, and their rights as labourers to be secured.

[Subject to slight alteration the points were agreed upon, and, in conjunction with the sentiments of a letter submitted by Dr. Horton, adopted as the basis of the memorial.]

Then followed the arduous work of securing signatures. In this matter Dr. Clifford and the honorary secretary, the Rev. G. P. McKay—to whom were entrusted the duty—spared no effort to secure the adhesion of the best-known men in the Churches. In this result they proved most successful, and in round numbers obtained co-operation as follows: Congregationalists, 1,100; Baptists, 1,000; Presbyterians, 950; Primitive Methodists, 800; Wesleyan Methodists, 500; Welsh Methodists, 300; Free Methodists, 200; New Connexion, 100; Bible Christians, 100;

Unitarians, 100 ; Friends, 50 ; New Church (Swedenborgian), 30 ; and Moravian, 15. Amongst individual signatories were some of the most distinguished ministers and teachers amongst the Free Churches.

III.

When Mr. Parnell, "the uncrowned King of Ireland," was convicted of an offence against the moral code, an attempt was made to rehabilitate him before his countrymen, in view of political considerations. Many politicians thought that to drum him out of public life spelt ruin to Home Rule. They therefore sought to spare him. The Irish members met in Dublin and enthusiastically passed a vote of confidence "in their adulterous leader," as Mr. Hugh Price Hughes boldly termed him. Some English Liberal papers had also agreed to the whitewashing process. But at this moment Dr. Clifford wrote a letter, in which he declared that "Mr. Parnell must go." This arrived at the psychological moment. Dr. Parker endorsed it in the City Temple and Mr. Price Hughes in St. James's Hall. These utterances happily synchronised with the meetings of the Liberal Federation, then taking place at Sheffield. The much-derided "Nonconformist conscience" evidently roused the Liberal party. Mr. Gladstone's letter to Mr. John Morley followed, and later came the declarations of the Irish Roman Hierarchy and of Cardinal Manning against Mr. Parnell.

Thus at a critical moment the moral sense of a

Christian nation prevailed, and a powerful and magnetic leader of a historic political party was driven into exile. Mr. Parnell's sun was eclipsed, and, practically speaking, his great political influence ceased after Dr. Clifford raised the issue in his letter. Discussing the question later, he asked, "Do men gather grapes of thorns? Will bad men make good laws? Will impurity legislate against itself? We keep the bankrupt out of the House; why open the door to the adulterer? But will you not forgive him? Certainly; but it is a far different thing to exalt him to honour and authority in the Legislature of the kingdom! Such a course is fraught with unutterable mischief, and is an affront to the rising moral sentiment of the people."

IV.

Dr. Clifford is President of the Christian Social Brotherhood, as formerly he was President of the Christian Socialist League, which included on its Council the late Rev. Professor H. C. Shuttleworth and the Rev. Percy Dearmer. The statement that Dr. Clifford is a Socialist ought to be qualified by Dr. Westcott's explanation that "The term Socialism has been discredited by its connection with many extravagant and revolutionary schemes, but it is a term which needs to be claimed for nobler uses. It has no necessary affinity with any forms of violence, or confiscation, or class selfishness, or financial arrangement."

With the late Bishop of Durham, Dr. Clifford asks in spirit "whether we have, in view of the teaching of present facts, considered what God's counsel for men in creation and redemption is? Whether the state of things in our towns and in our villages either answers or tends to answer the Divine idea? Whether the present distribution of wealth is not perilous alike to those who have and to those who want? Whether we have not accepted the laws of the material order as the laws of all nature? Whether we have pondered over the moral significance of the poor, and whether we have reflected on the wider application of that principle which it is the glory of medicine to have guarded, that every discovery affecting men's well-being is the property of the race, and not of the finder?"

In Dr. Westcott's sense Dr. Clifford is a Socialist.

V.

Another phase of his character as a "political Dissenter" is his ardent belief in the justice, expediency, and spiritual advantages of Disestablishment. Some Churchmen think that he simply wants to humble their Church in the dust, and that after all it is only "Dr. Clifford again on the rampage." To disillusion them a quotation from an article in the *Contemporary Review* may be given, summing up the position on the lines laid down by Edward Miall, when he said, "We must aim not so much to right ourselves as to right Christianity." "Our fathers," wrote Dr. Clif-

ford, "suffered and fought for what they described as 'the crown rights of King Jesus.' This is, be it believed or scorned, this is the real force at the heart of the agitation for Disestablishment or Disendowment. In that unselfish and sublime aim lies its unsubduable strength; from thence it draws its patience, its quenchless enthusiasm, and its assurance of final success. We aim to 'right Christianity,' to give free course to its lofty ideas, unhindered expression for the societies and institutes it creates, an unchecked opportunity for its aggressive and missionary enthusiasm; and surely,

"If precious be the soul of man to man,"

the qualities and forces of the Gospel of Christ will, as of old, vindicate the freedom granted to them in the service they bring to the life of man. Christian doctrines will not be regarded as abstract propositions, as articles of creeds, as conditions of admission to Church life, or as tests of character, but as the food of the soul. The 'fellowship of saints' will be a reality. Christian unity will be nourished. The sense of individual responsibility will be quickened. 'Liberty of prophesying' will be revived. The speech of the lip will cease to belie the thoughts, and forms of faith will keep pace with the inward belief. 'The holy Catholic Church' will shake herself from the dust. 'The captive daughter of Zion will loose herself from the bands of her neck,' and 'put on strength,' and 'clothe herself with her beautiful

garments'; and the voice of the prophet will be heard saying, 'Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations: and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.'

When this appeared in 1895 a distinguished clergyman wrote to thank him "very heartily" for his "excellent article," and assured him that the clergy were not all of one way of thinking on the subject. A large number cordially agreed with his sentiments, though few cared to express themselves openly about it owing to the strong pressure exerted by those in authority.

At the end of 1902 Dr. Clifford accepted the Presidency of the Liberation Society. No mere love of office impelled him to add to his burdens. Only as he said, "The strongest desire to do what I can to promote a movement absolutely vital to the progress of real religion, to the uplifting and consecration of the State, and to the welfare, spiritual and ethical, of the people of England." His election gave intense satisfaction to the Society's supporters. It placed the acknowledged leader of the Education fight in his right position. After the settlement of the present controversy must follow a supreme effort on behalf of Disestablishment. A privileged Church always means sectarian legislation and injustice to large numbers of the people.

He has since addressed meetings in several important provincial centres, where large and enthusiastic audiences have suggested comparison with the successful Liberation campaign carried on two or three decades since by Dr. R. W. Dale and Dr. Guinness Rogers.

For many years previously he was a strenuous supporter of the Society. He rendered his first service to it in 1870 by opening a discussion upon "the Union of Church and State, viewed in the light of present circumstances." This took place at Cross Street Chapel, Islington, and was fully reported in the *Nonconformist*. But even from his student's days he agreed with Lowell—

"Better rest beneath the sod
Than be true to Church and State
While you're doubly false to God."

VI.

Forty-five years' residence in London has given him an intense love for the immense township. He sees the civic pride in Manchester, Glasgow, Liverpool, and Leeds, and longs for the time when the Londoner will breathe a similar spirit, when the monopolist and vestry-monger will be completely disestablished, and instead of the spoils being divided amongst the few, that a collectivist policy will be more generally adopted. The aims of the London County Council, and the success already attained have filled him with hope that still further progress will be possible, so

that the toilers may possess decent dwellings instead of hovels, where chastity, ventilation, and sanitation are unknown quantities. For the Progressives he has worked unsparingly on the platform and in the press. The Progressives have brought more fully into London, he claims, "the gracious rule of God," and therefore, as this is a fundamental principle of his politics, he cannot escape laborious efforts to assist their return.

Dr. Clifford has taken his part in every Parliamentary and Educational contest in Marylebone—when it was a borough including Paddington—and in Paddington itself on the side of Radicalism, since his settlement in the district. He has always been prepared to do political spade-work for his own locality.

CHAPTER XV

A COLONIAL IMPERIALIST

“WE go to-morrow, and shall, I judge, be away for six months,” privately wrote Dr. Clifford, March 17, 1897. “You will be glad to know that I have been so well the last month that I feel as though I ought *not* to go. It looks like a *fraud*, I am so strong. But all the arrangements are made and I trust I may find the journey full of benefit to my wife, my daughter Edith, and myself.

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“I am anticipating great things in and from my pilgrimage. To me it looks like going to school again, and I want a quick and accurate observation, a vivid eye, a retentive memory, and a broad sympathy.”

The letter was written on the eve of a seven months' journey round the world for the benefit of his health. For some time previous he had suffered loss of vitality and the recuperative power which, under ordinary circumstances, he possesses so completely. The late Mr. James Huddart, a Wesleyan

member of his congregation at Westbourne Park, placed at his disposal passages for himself, Mrs. Clifford, and Miss Edith Clifford, whilst his Church raised £100 to provide pulpit supplies during his absence, and gave him a purse of £170 as a token of love and esteem. In addition they bid him "Good-bye" in the sunniest fashion, with the postscript that they looked forward to his home coming recovered and ready for further service.

In all probability the trip prolonged his life. At the same time it afforded an opportunity, most gladly embraced, of obtaining first-hand information upon the religious and educational problems of "God's Greater Britain." Besides his wife and daughter there were also the late Mr. A. Towers, one of his most zealous workers amongst young men, Miss Towers, and Mr. Parr in the party. They left London *en route* for Teneriffe and Cape Town. After calling at both places they proceeded to Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Queensland, Tasmania, and New Zealand. Then they went on to Fiji, Honolulu, and Vancouver, across the Dominion of Canada to New York and home. Over a hundred days were spent in the Australian Colonies, leaving the time available for Canada and the States somewhat limited. In the round tour they covered 30,000 miles.

Wherever he went the Colonials entertained him most hospitably. Speaking at the time more particularly of the Australian he says: "He cannot do

too much for you. He will get anything for you he can, show you anything he has, and tell you anything he knows. You land in the early morning, but these good people are at the docks before you with smiles and bouquets and invitations. Or you arrive late at night; and what is this? Here are a dozen men come twenty miles or more to meet you, and to ride with you to your destination and see that you are comfortably located."

With one exception the Baptists of Australia, New Zealand, and Canada were delighted to see him. Several of their ministers had come from the Old Country and were personally known to him. The others had followed his career and were familiar with his work "as a true servant of God," and as a champion of religious liberty and unsectarian education. It was therefore a time of encouragement and stimulation to them to receive such a visit. The Colonial minister considers England the centre of religious thought and activity, and the landing of a foremost preacher and leader upon his shores brings him for the time being into living touch with that central influence so keenly relished and appreciated. The Baptist Churches therefore invited him on every available opportunity to preach sermons, speak on their platforms, or take part in social functions. For many years previously he had endured much from the suspicions of some of his English brethren, to which allusion has already been made. But in the more expansive life of the Colonies he found a

generous appreciation of the life and character of a man rather than a microscopic examination as to his exact whereabouts in theology.

The Churches generally warmly greeted him. At Sydney, for instance, he received a public welcome in Pitt Street Congregational Church. The President of the Baptist Union presided, and amongst those present were the President of the Wesleyan Conference, and representative ministers from the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Primitive Methodists.

The Rabbi Landau, of Sydney, also referred to him in the following terms: "I wish to say that I regard Dr. Clifford as one of the most broad-minded of men, and have heard him oft described as such by Dr. Adler, the Chief Rabbi of British Congregations. Dr. Clifford's Chapel at Westbourne Park has more than once been the scene of gatherings addressed by Jewish ministers on subjects of inter-sectarian tolerance, and I believe that no man has better remembered the prophet's words, 'Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us?' than has Dr. Clifford. Such men as he are doing the constructive work of the world."

Through Dr. D. Bruce, then Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales, he received a copy of the following resolution unanimously passed by the General Assembly: "The Assembly notes with pleasure the arrival of the Rev. Dr. Clifford, of London, a highly

honoured minister of the Baptist Church. They send him fraternal greetings and a cordial welcome to Australia ; and they very cordially invite him to take a seat on the platform of the Assembly on Monday evening, or any other evening more suited to his convenience, and that the Moderator be requested to convey this resolution to Dr. Clifford."

But not only from representatives of the Churches did he receive kindnesses, but also from Lord Brassey, who was then Governor of Victoria, and Lady Brassey, Sir Fowell Buxton, then Governor of South Australia, and Lady Victoria Buxton, Sir Horace Tozer, of Queensland, and other well-known Colonials in official positions.

His trip had commenced as a recuperative holiday, but "during his four days in Brisbane," said the secretary of the Colonial Baptist Union, "he crowded in six meetings, two newspaper interviews, and quite half a dozen visits to public places or persons." An Australian writer gives further interesting details of his doings in the time mentioned, illustrating the rapidity with which he travelled and the amount of work he got through :—

"After hopes had been raised and disappointed two or three times, Dr. Clifford paid us an unexpected and very brief, but a very welcome, visit," he says. "The opportunity was due to the delay of the steamer *Aorangi*, caused by the breakdown of her forced-draught machinery. Dr. Clifford sent a telegram to our secretary on Wednesday afternoon, 7th

July. This was delayed by interruption, and did not reach Albion till the office was closed for the night. Dr. Clifford, however, sent at the same time a wire to Mr. Harriss, of South Brisbane, a former member of his Church, and whose guest he became while in Brisbane. This telegram was delivered about seven o'clock, and Rev. W. Poole made whatever hurried arrangements were possible, and caused Dr. Clifford's visit to be announced in the next morning's papers. On Thursday night our president, vice-president, and secretary, with Rev. W. Poole journeyed as far as Ipswich and met Dr. Clifford, who was accompanied by Mrs. and Miss Clifford. As far as possible, while in the train a programme was sketched out.

"On Friday Dr. Clifford called upon Sir Horace Tozer, and was courteously afforded much information on subjects in which the visitor was interested, and supplied with numerous Acts of Parliament on education, licensing, Polynesian labour, &c., &c. A visit was also paid to the Central School, the Exhibition, and some other places of interest, while Miss Clifford, who is nurse in a large hospital in the Old Country, naturally visited our Brisbane Hospital, with which she expressed herself much pleased.

"On Saturday afternoon the president of the Association held an 'at home' in the schoolroom of the City Tabernacle for the purpose of allowing friends to meet Dr. and Mrs. Clifford. There was a numerous attendance, and a very pleasant time was spent. On Saturday night Dr. Clifford delivered his

lecture on 'The Greater Britain of the Future,' in the City Tabernacle. His Excellency Lord Lamington took the chair, and a collection was taken for the Jubilee Convalescent Home Fund. Considering the very short notice and the generally unsuitable night there was a capital gathering, the audience filling all but the gallery. The lecture was a treat such as Brisbane has seldom enjoyed. The daily press rightly described it as an oration, and we have seldom seen an audience moved to such enthusiasm as the lecturer was able to evoke.

"On Sunday Dr. Clifford preached in the morning at South Brisbane, and in the evening at the City Tabernacle. On each occasion there was a full attendance, and in the evening many had to be turned away, there being not even standing room.

"On Monday morning Dr. Clifford met the Brisbane Ministers' Union at breakfast, and gave a very interesting address on 'The Present Trend of Thought in the Old Country.' From thence he proceeded to the luncheon of the Methodist Jubilee Meetings, and at night preached in the City Tabernacle to a very large congregation.

"Our visitors left by the mail train on Tuesday at 7.30 a.m. The officers of the Association and several other friends were on the platform, and at Ipswich, as on the way down, local friends met the train to greet the party."

The *Queensland Baptist* said, with some justification, "If his activity while in Brisbane was a speci-

men of his ordinary life, it is no wonder that he has broken down from sheer hard work, and if it were not that the sea voyage will enable him to recuperate, he would not be much the stronger for his so-called holiday trip."

A considerable portion of his time was occupied in making inquiries concerning the position of education in the Colonies. In the most progressive he found intense pride in their educational system. Referring especially to Victoria, Ontario, New Zealand, and Manitoba, he said that the people there "glory in the money they spend on education ; in the splendid buildings they rear ; in the successes their pupils win ; in the democratic bases on which they build ; and in the cheering promise for the future strength and development of the Colonies offered by their public schools."

He found that in New South Wales the teachers' duty was "to instruct the children in the principles of a free Government, and to train them up to the true comprehension of the rights and duties and dignity of citizenship." In Winnipeg he was told by one headmaster that they were training farmers, agriculturists, and housewives, and did not aim to prepare their boys and girls for the professions. In Manitoba and the North-west Territories he learnt that one-eighteenth of the land was apportioned as an educational endowment. When blocks upon this portion were sold the money was invested for the support of education.

The question of the "secular" qualities of the Colonial education naturally interested him. At home it had often been thrown in his teeth that this was a "godless" system, and provocative of irreligion and agnosticism. Thus his visit permitted an examination upon the spot. As the result of careful inquiries he says, "The word 'secular' never means non-religious, and only quite rarely, and in a limited sense, non-Biblical. It merely stands for a non-theological, non-dogmatic, non-credal, anti-sectarian method of using the contents of the Bible." He relates the following incident:

"In Launceston, Tasmania, I went into a school and saw a lesson on the black-board. I asked the head master what it was. 'It is history.' 'Yes; but it is Bible history.' 'Certainly.' 'But your system is secular.' 'Oh, yes.' 'Then you may teach Bible history?' 'Quite so.' 'And the Book of Proverbs?' 'Yes.' 'And a Psalm?' 'Yes.'

"I visited the public schools in Melbourne, Victoria," he continued, "and found in use by the children a paper containing, amongst other things, the 100th Psalm. I was surprised, and when I called on the head of the Education Department I asked, 'Do you issue portions of the Bible for the use of the children under what, I have been told again and again in England, is "a secular and godless system"?' He smiled, and pointing to the printed paper, said, 'Yes, there it is, and the next issue will, I expect, contain the 1st Psalm.'"

He also inspected the writing-books, and found appropriate texts as headlines for the children to copy. He conversed with teachers, and observed a fine enthusiasm for teaching religion by the influence of religious character. As far as circumstances permitted, he spoke with or wrote to parents who had children in the schools, and received in reply expressions of thankfulness for the effect the public education had upon the character of the children.

In New South Wales there was the "right of entry," out of school hours, when "facilities were given for sectarian teaching." As a general rule he learnt that the system did not give satisfaction. "Here and there," he says, "large classes are gathered, and the work is well and ably done, but I heard very few speak in its favour."

Next to interest in education must be placed his sympathy on behalf of movements for social betterment amongst the poor. He inspected the boarding-out system by which Australia and Canada did their duty to destitute children. These were placed in homes at the rate of 4s. 6d. to 5s. 6d. per week, paid by the State. The Colonies carefully attended to their moral well-being, and provided that "children boarded out must, by their foster-parents, be trained up to be God-fearing, honest, and truthful, respectful to their teachers and others, and obedient to their foster-parents, and shall attend the same church as their foster-parents." "Scarcely

is there a voice heard in the Colonies," he said, "speaking in favour of the old 'barrack' institution, with its ophthalmia and ringworm, its defective physique and weak intellect, its paralysed will and fierce hatred of society. It has had its day, and must soon cease to be. Australasia, whose sons and daughters have given more attention, proportionately to their numbers, than any other part of Greater Britain to this question, has fully and finally decided in favour of the boarding-out principle."

From his inquiries into the system he was persuaded of the facilities it gave for transforming what are termed "pauper" children into bright, intelligent, and educated members of the State, without the usual badge of charity. Hence the Colonies were saving men and women from moral wreckage, and at the same time upbuilding their own material prosperity.

There was also the subject of temperance, upon which he made detailed inquiries. In Canada, which is probably the most advanced of all the Colonies in this matter, he found definite scientific teaching was given in the elementary schools. In Ontario, for instance, he states that physiology and the injurious effects of alcoholic stimulants on the human system, were placed in the obligatory course of study for public schools in the same way as arithmetic or history. These regulations were carried out with such enthusiasm and thoroughness that the number of pupils in temperance and hygiene increased from 33,926 in 1882 to 191,715 in 1895.

"I was present," he says,¹ "at the delivery of a brilliantly illustrated lecture on 'Physiology and Alcohol' in a New Zealand school. The teacher knew his subject thoroughly, taught it clearly, and proved himself a master of the art of persuading his boys and girls to think for themselves on the facts shown to them; and when a few questions were put to them at the close, covering wider ground than had been taken up in the address, it was clear from their answers that they knew the facts themselves, and also their meaning and importance. Asked as to the effect of intemperance upon the character, one youth stated at once, 'It makes a man lose his self-respect'; another said, 'It makes him lose all hope'; and a third, in reply to a question as to its worst social effect, said, 'It destroys the home.'"

He rejoiced to find also that the laws of the Colonies protected the minor against the drink traffic, and anticipated by several years the legislation upon the same subject at home. Ontario penalised the sale of alcoholic liquor to those under eighteen, and by giving written notice to a publican a parent could protect his children until they obtained their majority. Queensland fixed the age at fourteen when a child could fetch and carry liquor, but a youth could not consume it on the premises until he was eighteen. In South Australia the age was fifteen, and in Manitoba and New Zealand sixteen.

¹ "God's Greater Britain" (Jas. Clarke & Co.), p. 103.

Amongst other sociological inquiries were those relating to the treatment of young offenders and the working of children's courts in Canada and Adelaide. In these cases charges against young persons under the age of sixteen were heard apart from other offenders, and without publicity.

The zeal with which he studied these and kindred questions at length made his friends exclaim that he was doing as much work on his holiday as at home. With difficulty they endeavoured, though with no great success, to moderate his inquiries.

His speeches and addresses roused much approval from Colonial audiences. "It delighted him," he said, "to be in Australia and see Australians face to face." He would ask no questions about origin. "I don't care where a man comes from. I want to know where he is going," he added, amidst enthusiastic applause. Greater Britain had been a theme which had always charmed him. In olden times when a Greek left Athens he left the State behind him. Out of the State he was out of citizenship. When a Britisher left Great Britain he carried the State with him wherever he went.

With a jest Dr. Clifford has stated that he was an Imperialist before Mr. Chamberlain. Behind the humour there is fact. During his tour he made a special point at public gatherings of enforcing the truths of Imperial unity. He had come, he said, to learn what the facts were, and to weigh them for himself, so that he might form such a judgment upon

them as might be of service in binding together the whole Anglo-Saxon brotherhood, and make them completely one people for the advancement of those great principles with which, as an Anglo-Saxon race, they had been entrusted by God. The suggestion of separation from the Old Country would be treason to the great forces with which the great Anglo-Saxon people were charged, and treason to the high commission which they had received from the God of the peoples of the earth as defenders of the liberty of conscience, and as guardian of all other liberties. Nothing had rejoiced him more as he passed from point to point than to witness the strong feeling of real unanimity amongst the Colonies themselves and with the people of Canada and the Old Country. They were one, and no people in connection with the British Empire would celebrate the Record Reign [that of Her late Majesty, Queen Victoria] with more enthusiasm and more unity than would the people of the Australian Colonies.

"It is our duty," he said, on his return, "to nourish in every possible way the sentiment of unity which binds us together, to strengthen the conviction of the solidarity of our interests, and to quicken the sense of a common responsibility for so directing and inspiring our collective life that it shall help men 'to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.' Then with a mighty hope we may offer the prayer of Cromwell's great secretary, 'Thou who of Thy free grace didst build up this Britannick Empire

to a glorious and enviable height, with all her Daughter Islands about her, stay us in this felicitie.'"¹

Dr. Clifford's Imperialism—it may readily be perceived—is not of that Jingo element which declares that Colonial ties will be severed unless England gives a trade preference to the Colonies. He holds loftier conceptions of the loyalty of the peoples of the Mother Empire across the seas. To think otherwise makes them bastards and not sons.

The trip included many pleasurable incidents. Not content with lavish hospitality, the Baptists presented him with tangible tokens of esteem and affection. It had also its adventures, as when, for instance, the party negotiated the descent of the Britannia (Limited) Gold Mine, Ballarat, nearly one thousand feet below the level. "The miners' attire" which they wore on the occasion was picturesque, if not absolutely becoming. On one occasion they sent their baggage by another boat, and, this being wrecked, lost many of their belongings, including the Doctor's presentation gold watch, and MS. notes of the journey which he had made.

They witnessed the manner in which the Australians kept Jubilee Day. "On the 22nd of June we were in the city of Hobart, Tasmania," he wrote. "It was mid-winter, but the day was as rich in all loveliness and beauty as though it were an English day in midsummer. The whole city was astir as we started

¹ "God's Greater Britain" (Jas. Clarke and Co.), p. 22.

out for a charming drive to Brown's River, one of the favourite resorts of the Hobartians, under the kindly lead of our host, Mr. Leslie Cockhead, formerly one of the Westbourne Park young men ; and though it was the middle of the Antipodean winter, we roamed the woods and wandered along the shores of the bay, and had an altogether delightful time. Meanwhile crowds gathered at the Jubilee festival of the children of all the schools, and others took part in the civic celebrations of the 'Record Reign' of the Queen. The city was illuminated in the evening, and at ten o'clock the Governor read a message from the Queen, and forthwith some ten thousand or more people gathered in front of the City Hall and sang, 'All people that on earth do dwell' with fine spirit and in good tune, and then followed with the National Anthem."

On his return to England he was met by some of his people at Liverpool, and a few days after arrival home a most enthusiastic reception at Westbourne Park took place in his honour. To compensate for the loss of his watch he received a handsome gold timekeeper, and to Mrs. Clifford was presented a screen. The friends who could not be present showered their congratulations upon him in telegrams and felicitous letters.

Many of his Colonial impressions have been recorded in "God's Greater Britain," published by Messrs. Jas. Clarke and Co., already quoted in this chapter.

CHAPTER XVI

PRESIDENCY OF THE NATIONAL FREE CHURCH COUNCIL

WHEN the history of the Free Church Federation movement is written the credit of initiating this far-reaching and potential organisation must be given to two leaders—Dr. Guinness Rogers and the late Mr. Price Hughes. The story has often been told how Dr. Rogers wrote his letter to the *Methodist Times*, suggesting a Free Church Congress on the lines of the Church Congress. Mr. Hughes strongly approved the suggestion, and ably and convincingly supported the proposal in a leading article. In the following issue letters of approval appeared from other well-known men, and amongst the number one from Dr. Clifford.

The Free Churches possessed other organisations, such as the Dissenting Deputies, Fraternal, and Prayer Unions, which made for unity in a limited way. But a federation for the promotion of united spiritual work had never previously assumed anything more than local dimensions. Nonconformists

had united in occasional special efforts, such as the Central Nonconformist Committee. They had also endeavoured for many years in the Liberation Society to promote religious liberty, but the Wesleyans were only sparsely represented in its membership. Moreover, just at this period the symptoms of "dry rot" were evident, and the palmy days of the Society seemed past. Thank God! there is life to-day! The moment was ripe, but the difficulties well-nigh insuperable! Dissent had gloried in its independence. Some of the more conservative Wesleyans had even stated that they were not Nonconformists in the ordinarily accepted sense. "A rope of sand" admirably represented the Free Churches as a whole prior to this period.

The Pilgrim Fathers builded better than they knew. So those who were at the birth of the National Free Church Council cherished and developed into being an organisation which for spiritual purposes, defence, and solidarity was hitherto undreamt of. They provided a common meeting-ground for Wesleyans and Congregationalists, Baptists and Presbyterians, Quakers and Methodists generally, upon which their best men have met and supported objects common to all.

One cannot resist the temptation to express delight—in a paragraph—at the record of the National Council. Its years are few, but its deeds many. If it had accomplished nothing except the Simultaneous Mission, the provision of three permanent missionaries

or the formation of the Free Church Girls' Guild, it would have answered by fourfold the expectations of the founders. But more than this, a distinct revival of evangelical religion amongst the Free Churches has followed. There is a larger charity, and instead of individual Church agencies one witnesses united spiritual efforts, which have impressed the "man in the street." The combination has also influenced politicians. The National Council can now speak for the Free Churches as a whole, representing more than one-half of the religious life of the nation. In the present Education struggle the advantages have proved incalculable. A powerful, alert, and well-equipped organisation in touch with all parts of the country is now in the field, and under wise direction educating the country to the iniquities of an unjust measure.

Two years and nine months elapsed before the first Congress was held in Manchester after the idea had been mooted. This took place on November 7, 1892, when a public demonstration was held under the presidency of Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P. Amongst the speakers was Dr. Clifford, who, with Dr. Monro Gibson and the late Dr. Berry, made an earnest appeal for the unity of the Free Churches. The next Congress was arranged in Leeds, March, 1894, in Birmingham the following year, and then at Nottingham (1896), London (1897), and Bristol in 1898. This was the year when Dr. Clifford became president, having been preceded in the office by

Dr. Charles Berry, Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, and Dr. Monro Gibson.

In the interval which had elapsed since its inception in 1890, the National Free Church Council was gradually evolved from the idea of the Congress. Primarily this occurred as a result of the organising ability of the Rev. Thomas Law, who was associated with the movement from its start. In Bradford he had obtained wide experience of united effort with respect to house-to-house visitation, and at the Congress held in 1892 read a paper entitled "Nonconformist Parishes," in which he quoted the knowledge obtained at the woollen centre through the organisation he directed. By coincidence Mr. Percy Bunting, the editor of the *Contemporary Review*, preceded him, and made a proposal for the union of the Free Churches to carry out evangelistic and social work in the towns. For this purpose he suggested their sub-division into districts. Thus the plan of one speaker, followed by the experience of another, led to the establishment of the Free Church parochial system, and Mr. Law was deputed to explain this scheme in various important centres. This he did subsequently with great success.

Incidentally Mr. Law has informed the writer that Dr. Clifford was *au courant* with the Bradford house-to-house visitation. He had perceived the importance of the step, and arranged with a local correspondent to post him the details of the scheme

and its results. This fact is but another illustration of the student's methods he adopts in reference to questions which affect the Free Churches.

Then followed more work for Mr. Law. In 1894 the Committee of the Federation requested him to act as joint secretary with the Rev. J. M. Gwynne Owen in organising local councils throughout the country. As a result of these efforts one hundred and thirty councils were formed before the Congress met in Birmingham in 1895. At the latter gathering Mr. Law, who was then in the active ministry of the Methodist Free Churches in the suburbs of Birmingham, became honorary organising secretary. In the following year, by the spontaneous desire of the Executive and the approval of the Council, he received a unanimous invitation to place himself entirely at the disposal of the Federation. The wisdom of this step on the part of the Committee has been amply and abundantly justified by the remarkable growth and vitality of the movement under Mr. Law's secretariat.

When Dr. Clifford occupied the presidential chair the number of local councils affiliated to the headquarters had increased to five hundred.

The first address he delivered in connection with the National Council was at its gathering held in London from March 9 to 11, 1897, when Dr. Monro Gibson was in the chair. On this occasion he dealt with "The Present Aims of the Free Churches." He felt on sure grounds, he said, in claiming that "as



Photo. Passingham, Brighton.

DR. CLIFFORD, AGE 59.

Churches our first and most formative purpose is to realise the ideal Jesus Christ Himself has given us of His own society." Secondly, he asserted that the Free Churches sought "to carry to perfect fulness and maturity the individual and collective spiritual life." Thirdly, they had "a mission to the myriads at their gates." Fourthly, they aimed at the fullest use and the most perfect consecration of all their members, gifts, resources, and opportunities. Fifthly, they felt that men designed for the Christian pastorate must be given an increasingly adequate training. Sixthly, he urged them to remember that Churches, teachers, and taught alike were as they thought. Seventhly, he asked, Was the term "'Free' as descriptive of our Churches" indicative of a really present aim? Lastly, they must consider that their most comprehensive purpose was to build "the new city of God."

With an inspiring peroration he closed his address in a paragraph which summed up the points he had expounded. "In every way, then, that is open to us, let us be faithful to Christ; let us preach Him; His gentleness and tenderness, as well as His strength and majesty. It was the eclipse of His tenderness by Romanistic theology that created the craving for the worship of the Virgin; and, since you can only displace as you replace, the fine feminine qualities of Christ must be proclaimed as part of His perfect manhood. We must witness to His keen social sympathies, not less than to His sacrifice on the

cross ; His actual ministry in the toils and struggles of to-day as well as in the long ages gone by. Christ is an exhaustless source of Social Reform. Let us witness for Him in and through our Churches. They are His. He has made them, and not we ourselves. To Him they are sacred. Let us reverence them and nourish in them all the graces and courtesies of the Christian life. They are the organs of His Spirit. Let us seek to be filled with that Spirit. Here is our power. This is the spring of our aggressiveness, of our courage in dealing with all the problems of life, and of our victory over all that prevents us from realising the highest type of social existence. Let each pastor and elder, teacher and deacon, evangelist and visitor, make full proof of his ministry in the service of man, and so demonstrate that our Churches are in the true succession of the Churches of the first years."

At the close of the sessions he was nominated as the next president by Dr. Monro Gibson. In a graceful speech the latter said that they all rejoiced in Dr. Clifford's restoration to health which enabled him to do such splendid work for the country and to give such a magnificent address as he had done the other morning. "But how he has managed to renew his strength I can scarcely imagine. I heard about his being laid aside and resting, but I saw no sign of it. I see no slacking. If he has been resting, I should like to know who has been working. I can scarcely call him a young man, but I should like to know what young man in all the land there is to

excel him in fire, in mettle, in pluck, in endurance, in elasticity, in verve, and in irrepressible ardour."

For his presidential address to the Council at Bristol, March 8, 1898, he took as his subject "The Unity of the Churches. The Problem Solved." With full and overflowing measure he delivered a glowing panegyric upon the results of the Federation, and with passionate eloquence urged Free Churchmen to the accomplishment of high ideals which were but the natural corollary of unity. The Lambeth Conference held in the previous year was instanced as being of much value and significance, but it was a meeting of Bishops and Archbishops exclusively, and the voice of the laity was not once heard. They on the other hand came straight from six millions of Free Churchmen, able to express their aspirations and to further their aims for the extension of the kingdom of God. The last Roman Catholic Œcumenical Council, though large and influential, deepened existing divisions within its own domain and postponed the unity of Christendom by scores of years. But their Council, which embraced Congregationalists and Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists, had evoked comradeship and brotherhood amongst the Free Churches that recalled the ardent catholicity of the first days.

Dealing with the characteristics of their unity, he showed that these were not mechanical, but vital and growing—a union in the living Christ, and primarily in their personal experience of His redeeming power

and indwelling grace, in their interpretation of His revelation of God as a God of redemption and renewal, and in their glad obedience to His holy law. As individuals they were one with "all who invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours." They had been brought into a unity that promised to permeate and pervade their whole action and to quicken their zeal in the discovery and redemption of lost man all the world over. That union had been effected without the surrender of their distinctive ideas or the attainment of perfect sameness of theological beliefs. They had not found their unity along the macadamised road of uniformity of rite or worship. Still less was there any external rearrangement of their denominational machinery. No! their unity had been attained (1) chiefly through co-operated search for men who had lost God and lost faith and love and life; and (2) through the uprising of a deep and strong sense of their substantial agreement in aims and hopes, in spirit and in service, through common subjection to Jesus Christ as their one and only Redeemer and Master. It was the Lord's doing, and most marvellous in the eyes of those who had watched the movement advance so rapidly from its small beginnings to its most prophetic proportions.

The old Catholic Church had lost the ideal, but they, as Free Churchmen, were now recovering it. It was their first duty as a Federation to maintain the conviction and settlement of their real unity as Churches, and secondly to provide the best facilities

for communion and intercommunion. Walt Whitman, rapt into ecstasy with the vision of the coming union of men, sang—

“I will make divine magnetic lands,
With the love of comrades,
With the life-long love of comrades.”

“Cannot we hasten that day?” exclaimed the President. “It is not possible for us to foster and develop such a spirit of universal comradeship in the cause of peace and purity and righteousness as to compel men to recognise that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto us.”

Their numbers gave them a fresh vision of their responsibility, and here he harked back to the missionary instincts of the Primitive Church, which was as missionary as it was united, and its members sought by all means to save men. “I am forced to believe,” he said in an inspiring passage, that that “passion for souls is the deepest need of all the Churches of our land at this moment. We complain that men do not come to us. When did they *go* to the Churches? Our Master bids *us* ‘go’ to them—and go we must with His message and in His spirit if they are to be led into the light of His gospel.”

After dealing with the development of the spiritual energies of their Churches and the privileges and responsibilities of Church fellowship, he closed with a trumpet call, “Forward, then, brethren, as with the heart of one. The unity of the Churches is a solved problem. It remains for us to vindicate the solution

by the complete evangelisation of mankind, by the loftiness and harmony, robustness and beauty of the spiritual manhood in our Churches, and by the permeation of the entire social order with a leaven of the righteousness and peace, freedom and joy, of the gospel of Christ. Jesus Himself leads. Let us follow ever unfearing, all daring, all hoping, and whole-hearted, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of the God and Father of us all."

This summary conveys but an impression of his brilliant address, which extended in length to nearly a seventh of the present volume. The Council received it with acclamation, and of all the notable messages which have been delivered from the presidential chair none have exceeded it in force, lofty spirit, and passionate earnestness.

His year of office embraced a large addition to the local councils. As a means of consolidating and extending the operations of the movement he visited nearly forty of the largest towns in the kingdom. He placed himself in the hands of Mr. Law with respect to dates, and, says the organising secretary with a smile, "allowed me to send him here or there as best suited the occasion." Two or three days of every fortnight were freely given by the Doctor in this way to the National Council's work.

Two impressions distinctly remained with him as the result of these visitations. He was encouraged first by the discovery that young Free Church men and

women were in hearty sympathy with their aims and principles. Secondly—and of greater importance—he was greatly cheered by the success of the Council's evangelistic work. "I have always been afraid of what some people have called religious hysterics," he confessed, "and have shrunk from endorsing attempts to carry men into the kingdom of God on the crest of the waves of a fleeting emotional excitement." The experience thus gained convinced him not only of the necessity of mission services, but the wisdom with which these were conducted by the Council's missionaries.

During his presidency also the Simultaneous Mission took practical shape. From the commencement of its history the National Free Church Council was designed for spiritual purposes. First and foremost its work consisted in bringing the Churches into union for the quickening and deepening of the religious life of its members. With this purpose in view a pastoral was issued by the general committee earnestly entreating Free Churchmen to remember the mission in their devotions from day to day, and Councils were urged to give as frequent opportunities as possible for united waiting upon God and also by the appointment of "Quiet Days." Though he had then relinquished office, it is only fair to remember that he presided at the committees where many of the preliminaries were successfully negotiated.

A unique gathering took place on December 1, 1898, in the City Temple under his chairmanship

as President of the National Council, when a demonstration expressive of Free Church principles was organised with great success. At the time Mr. Price Hughes held the chief position in the Wesleyan Conference, and for once the chairmen and presidents of all the Free Church Unions and Conferences met together on one platform. During the evening eleven speeches were delivered by eleven of these leaders. "Nothing more significant has happened in this country for the last 300 years," said Mr. Price Hughes at the time. "If we are not making history," said Dr. Clifford from the chair, "we are certainly registering a forward march in the development of the most important religious movement of the closing years of the century." The lay press generally adopted this view, and duly appreciated the significance of the assembly.

His last service as President was the delivery of a sermon at the Tuesday's session when the Council assembled in Liverpool. He chose as text Jeremiah xxxi. 10, 11, and took as subject, "The Crisis in the Church, its place in the development of British Religion." It proved a timely utterance, dealing with the position of the Anglican Church in consequence of the excesses of clergymen connected with the English Church Union. He argued that this Romeward tendency, essentially a recrudescence of the Oxford Movement, was a "war of the Bishops and clergy upon the rights of the whole Church of God, of the priest upon the Christian community."

Elsewhere, the optimistic side of his character has been discussed, but in this sermon there was a vivid passage illustrating the point. Dealing with "the crisis in the Church," he stated that it was not likely to be hurtful to religion in the end. "Let us have no misgiving," he urged, "as to the final issues of the deep and fierce strife in our National Church. The struggle is painful and in many ways distressing, but it is an inevitable stage in the progress of religion towards a more Christ-like Christianity, a fuller and deeper religion, and a more catholic and unsectarian unity than any we now possess." That his words may come true is the hope of all Free Churchmen.

Altogether this was a memorable year for him. In addition to his heavy presidential duties he undertook a visit to the States in the autumn and attended a large number of public meetings there, with a view to the furtherance of the Federation idea. He found the movement proceeding in America, though there were natural difficulties in the way. The American Churches felt the need for co-operation in service if, as he stated, the whole country was to be evangelised, the life of the larger towns purified, and civic and political activities lifted to the plane of justice and brotherhood.

In the Cromwell Tercentenary arranged by the National Council in 1899, he bore a large part. This was only natural, for the great Protector, in his unbending character, prowess, and love of liberty, is a

great exemplar for Dr. Clifford. "Never forget you are in the Cromwellian succession!" he wrote in his pamphlet prepared for the occasion, which circulated in thousands through the country. "It is for you to repeat his chaste and virtuous life, his struggle to subdue his passions and serve his God, his stainless fidelity to conscience, his all-round manhood. As soon as we lose our power to make men of the type of Oliver Cromwell we have lost all!"

To many Dr. Clifford appears as a veritable Twentieth Century Cromwell, nor is the simile ill-adapted. We find the same unbending opposition to priestly tyranny and arrogance, the same chivalrous defence of religious liberty, and the godly tone and spirit that was rarely absent from the Protector's speech and writings.

Mr. Law tells me of a characteristic incident which happened during the celebration in Huntingdon. It was a gusty day, and the gathering was held in the market-place under cloudy skies. Aware of the Doctor's rule to arm himself on special occasions with copious notes, Mr. Law said to him, "How are you going to manage to-day, Doctor? Won't you be at some disadvantage?" "Oh no," he replied; "just wait a bit." Sure enough he managed his notes without serious difficulty. As usual he divided them into three portions—the full note, the outline, and the quotations, and though the wind was high, kept them in order as easily as a deft card-player manipulates his cards.

The history of the preparation of the Free Church

Catechism in which he shared the labours of ten representatives from Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, affords a most convincing chapter in the unity of the Churches. It has been a revelation and intense surprise to Anglicans. Previously they affected to disbelieve the real unity in sentiment, theological essentials, and missionary zeal amongst Nonconformists. The catechism proved a concrete instance which they could scarcely disregard. The committee included Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, who presided, Drs. Berry, Mackennal, Dykes, Monro Gibson, Tymms and Clifford, Professors Gould and Peake, and the Rev. H. B. Kendall, B.A. For two years this committee collaborated. In the first case Dr. Dykes prepared the original draft, which was canvassed paragraph by paragraph. Then a committee, enlarged to twice the previous size, carefully revised the draft and discussed it line by line, every question and every answer being finally adopted without a dissentient vote.

During the Simultaneous Missions Dr. Clifford and Gipsy Smith addressed large and overflowing audiences in Birmingham. To the former it was somewhat of a new experience. At the close his share in the conduct of the meetings was thus described by a writer in the *Baptist Times* :—

“ When the Secretary of our local Free Church Council first announced that the missionaries appointed for our city were Dr. Clifford and ‘ Gipsy ’ Smith, a friend observed in an undertone, ‘ Surely that is a remarkable combination.’ ”

"Last week I met that friend again, and reminded him of his remark, and his reply was, 'Well, it was a remarkable combination, was it not?'

"But there was a different inflection on the word 'remarkable.' It was a remarkable combination, and as felicitous as remarkable, and it probably fell to the lot of no other city or town in the provinces to enjoy the services day after day, for an entire week, of two men so differently endowed, and yet by the superb exercise of their different gifts contributing to such magnificent results.

"Dr. Clifford's first appearance was made in the Town Hall at noon on Monday, the special duties allotted to him being to conduct a series of services during the luncheon hour of the business people in the city. Although it was Monday, and the Doctor had travelled up from London after a hard day's work, there was no trace of fatigue either in his face or in his voice, and certainly none in his spirit. (Does he ever, I wonder, suffer from that 'Monday-ishness' which is the lot of other ministerial mortals?) Dr. Clifford's audience filled the body of the great hall, and overflowed into the gallery. It numbered, at a moderate estimate, twelve hundred people, and was representative of the culture and intelligence of our Free Churches of every denomination. The attendance on succeeding days was more than maintained, and the interest grew with each service to the close of the series on Friday.

"The general theme of Dr. Clifford's addresses was

'Reconciliation with God,' and the same text was announced by him each day, except Friday, 2 Cor. v. 19: 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' The final exhortation on Friday was appropriately based on Phil. ii. 12: 'Work out your own salvation.'

"It would be impossible to summarise the substance of these remarkable deliverances. Those who know Dr. Clifford will understand the difficulty of conveying in a few bald sentences any just impression of the intellectual and profoundly spiritual force of his utterances. All that one can say is, they were magnificent, cogent in argument, luminous in illustration, impassioned in appeal, and deeply impressive in their spiritual earnestness. These addresses must have been a revelation to those good people who cannot be persuaded that a man can keep abreast with the critical and intellectual thought of the age, and yet maintain the simplicity and fervour of an evangelical faith."

One in purpose, though strikingly dissimilar in many respects, the two missionaries, whilst working on individual lines, admirably supplemented the work of each other. In his "Autobiography" "Gipsy" says: "Dr. Clifford, my colleague in this campaign—and no better colleague could a man have—delivered a series of noonday addresses on 'Be ye reconciled unto God,' which made a profound impression. . . . At the evening service Dr. Clifford sat by my side,

except when he was conducting overflow meetings in Carr's Lane Chapel. I felt in every service that he was praying for me and supporting me by his deepest sympathy."

Dr. Clifford received a happy reminder of his work in Birmingham on the first anniversary of the mission in the following telegraphic message :—

"Great meeting last night in Birmingham Town Hall, anniversary of Simultaneous Mission, send hearty greeting to Dr. Clifford. Remembered with gratitude his inspiring sermons during the mission, and prayed that the blessing of Almighty God might increasingly attend his fruitful ministry."

At the Bradford Council, in 1902, he roused the delegates to the serious question of the housing of the poor, and quoted an experience supplied him by Miss Ruth Dearle, the deaconess employed by his own Church at Bosworth Road. In one house, she reported, consisting of eight rooms and an ante-room, forty-four persons dwelt ; in another of the same size, where the back parlour was empty and the door broken down, there were thirty-seven ; and in another house in the same street, without an ante-room, twenty-six human beings were huddled together. He related many other awful facts upon the same subject, and asked, What had the Christian Churches been doing whilst those evils had been growing up at their very doors ? He feared that as a whole they were still apathetic and guiltily unaware of the actual living conditions of their suffering fellow-citizens,

cherishing the notion that they were doing the whole work demanded of them by the Saviour when they had delivered their message concerning the saving of the soul.

The address was given at the close of a long afternoon session, and invaded the time set apart for tea. Still he maintained his audience—as few men could have done—to the end.

At the Brighton Council, it will be remembered, he moved the first of the six resolutions upon the Education Question. This expressed the indignation of the Council that the House of Commons, elected for an entirely different issue, and with no mandate to reverse the educational policy of the nation, should have passed into law, in spite of the unmistakable manifestations of public feeling, a Bill which, apart from its graver faults, constrained so many law-abiding citizens to refuse to pay the rate. Dr. Clifford emphasised two points. In the first place the Education Act of 1902 had been passed directly and immediately in opposition to the will of the people. In the second place it was in defiance of the justice, righteousness, equality and progress of the people. He emphasised the consequences that must eventually fall upon the Anglican Church for its share in the passing of the Act. "No Church," he said, in a striking passage, "could do that sort of thing without being punished very severely, and no State could engage in such things as those, which were called by the man in the street wanting in high ideal and in

true loyalty to great ethical convictions, without injuring the State and injuring the whole of the community."

The platform of the National Council includes many eloquent preachers, brilliant speakers, and prominent leaders, and it would be invidious to attempt a discrimination of their relative positions. One may say, however, that no speaker is more assured of a ready welcome at the Council meetings than Dr. Clifford. The thousands present will listen to him for an hour without counting the minutes. They love the little round-shouldered Baptist, with the massive head and shaggy hair. He is their hero of many fights. His glowing periods, filled with the Puritan spirit, stir their souls and consciences. They cannot hesitate to resist a bad law after such deliverances.

"To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

On committees of the National Council he has always worked regularly and industriously. One of his colleagues informs the writer that he is an excellent committee man. In some points Mr. Price Hughes, who possessed unrivalled powers of initiation and grasp of detail, might have excelled him, but Dr. Clifford's genius consists in the power of carrying through committee, by his eloquence, broad policies and large organised efforts. He fights strenuously, and with his whole ability, for what he conceives the right line. Never, however, with cliques

and parties, but always in the open and without fear or favour. Obstinacy never dictates a hopeless position against the majority. He gracefully accepts the situation. Defeated, he is not disagreeable. His colleagues appreciate his transparent honesty of purpose even when differing from him. To them he remains the untitled leader of Nonconformity, and this place is always reserved to him, no man seeking to dethrone him. Upon the discussion of educational resolutions he advises with authority, and when chairman of committee manages the business with ease and celerity.

CHAPTER XVII

EDUCATION CONTROVERSIES, 1894-1901

DR. CLIFFORD was always attracted by educational subjects. First, from keen appreciation of education for its own sake. Second, from love of religious liberty. When Mr. Forster introduced his Education Bill in 1870 the former quickly discriminated between its good and bad points. Writing in the *General Baptist Magazine* (1870) he agreed that the Bill was an honest and able attempt to deal with the necessities of the nation in the matter of education. But he saw its serious defects. No Local Board, he urged, should possess unrestricted power to determine religious teaching in schools aided and supported by the rates. Then—as now—he held that the function of Government was exclusively secular, and that religious education should be left to the voluntary zeal of religious people. “Why should a citizen,” he pertinently asked, “be forced to pay for teaching children on a Monday those religious dogmas he has freely condemned on the Sunday?”



By kind permission of Mr. T. Fisher Unwin.

FROM "FROISSART'S MODERN CHRONICLES."

With Dr. Dale and Dr. Guinness Rogers he unequivocally condemned the re-enactment of a form of Church rates. "Let this part of the Bill become law," he said, "and the fires of sectarian strife will be fed with inexhaustible fuel." He, therefore, urged every Baptist church to petition against "this fresh phase of Government endowment of religion."

Every Educational contest in the Metropolis since the passing of the 1870 Act has found him working strenuously for the Progressive side. In 1894, at a most critical period, he became the leader of his party. The Progressives were then fighting for ascendancy and against an insidious form of sectarian intolerance. Mr. Athelstan Riley, a member of the English Church Union, had used his position upon the Board to impose a religious test upon the teachers. He was naturally supported by the extreme Anglicans, and after much wrangling carried his proposal by a small majority. The circular to the teachers—embodying the principle of the test—informed them what religious views they were to teach and what they were to avoid. If they could not conscientiously obey the Board's orders, means would be taken to relieve them from the duty of giving the Bible lessons, "but without prejudice to their position." The circular further stated that "the religious opinions of candidates will not, in any way, influence their appointment or promotion, nor are they to be subject to any questions with respect to their religious belief." Even under this gloss the sinister

designs of clericalism were too palpably patent and undisguised.

The teachers frankly recognised the position. At a meeting attended by 1,000, held April 7, 1894, they expressed "extreme regret" that such a circular was about to be issued, and declared that they had done their best to instruct the children in the principles of morality. They believed they had done so with success and without complaint from parents. "But," they added, "our strongest objection to the circular rests in the fear that it will create disabilities, and be made the means of persecuting some of the most conscientious amongst us. We greatly fear that it will operate as a religious test, and that individual teachers who may ask to be relieved from the duty of giving the Bible instruction will thereby debar themselves from promotion, and make themselves obnoxious to some managers and members of the Board. Under these circumstances we most respectfully and earnestly appeal that the circular may not be issued."

The circular, however, was not withdrawn, and six days later the teachers stated: "We feel that we cannot conscientiously continue the instruction, and we therefore respectfully ask to be relieved of the duty."

The rule of the first London School Board, which it was practically proposed to alter, stated that the Bible was to be read in the schools, and the children were to be given "such instructions therefrom in the

principles of morality and religion as are suited to the capacities of children, provided always that in such explanations and instructions the provisions of the Act in sections 7 and 14 be strictly observed both in letter and spirit, and that no attempt be made in any such schools to attach children to any particular denomination."

Even the Bishop of London—then Dr. Temple—told his clergy at the time that "he did not feel himself justified in withholding his opinion that the circular was a great mistake. It went in some degree in the direction of establishing a new sort of creed or formulary, and in some degree it was like creating a new Christian denomination of those who believed in these three doctrines. In that spirit it did not appear to him to be consistent with the Act of Parliament." But the Bishop changed his views—unfortunately for himself—as the controversy proceeded.

A strong manifesto was issued by the Progressive minority on the School Board, who protested against the claim "made by the majority to the special patronage of Christianity, and against their attempt to throw mud on the minority by imputations of irreligion. We are satisfied that should the theological policy of the present Board be maintained, it will be dangerous to religious liberty and fatal to religious sincerity. But we also condemn the theological activity of the present Board, because it has hindered the due discharge of our work in

developing and improving education. The majority are the partisans and champions of the denominational system. They seek election in the interest of the denominational schools, and they vote against necessary school provision or necessary school improvement in the interest of the rival system which they support."

This then was the position in 1894. The Anglicans thought first of sectarianism, and lastly of education. With their majority on the London School Board they starved the schools and kept thousands of children without school places whilst wrangling at the Board's meetings concerning denominational teaching. A bitter comment upon their love of efficient elementary education! But from the time of Dr. Bell, with few exceptions, it has always been the promotion of "the education of the poor in the principles of the Established Church." Yes! "Established Church," first; Education, second.

A School Board election was in view, and Dr. Clifford agreed to become honorary secretary of a large and representative organisation embracing the London Progressives. For ten months he worked at his accustomed high pressure. He forecasted his own share in the fight of a decade later by writing letters, addressing meetings, and generally assisting to organise all the forces of progress against reaction. The policy he maintained was simply—(1) The maintenance of free and efficient education in day and evening schools alike; (2) the provision of

conveniently-situated school buildings; (3) the abolition of overcrowding and under-staffing; (4) the maintenance of the compromise of 1870; and (5) the protection of the teachers from religious tests.

By a majority of 145,000 votes the London electors expressed their disapproval of Mr. Athelstan Riley and his test, though owing to the cumulative vote he and his party secured a majority of three seats. But they were powerless to enforce their sectarian plans upon the Board, and London Progressives justly regarded the election results as a victory.

By general consent Dr. Clifford was recognised as the "one man in London" to whom praise was due for the result. Both lay and religious press united in the eulogy. He deserved it. Against much apathy and fighting powerful parochial machinery he had crippled a pugnacious and aggressive form of Anglicanism, which fortunately, so far as the London School Board was concerned, never recovered the blow.

In this election he was ably supported by the *Daily Chronicle*.

Dr. Clifford modestly wrote to a friend during the contest an optimistic prophecy which, unlike some prophecies, came true:—

"I am trying to say a true and helpful word on our London School Board fight. Amongst other questions this is one of the most urgent. Danger threatens of the gravest kind, but I think we may

not only ward it off, but convert the occasion into a starting-point for a more effective work for Young Britain."

Speaking generally, Anglicans were not defeated. They had influential friends in the Unionist Government intent upon benefiting Church schools at the expense of the ratepayers. Therefore in 1896, with the openly avowed purpose of crippling the Board Schools, and still further endowing the so-called Voluntary Schools, the Government framed the abortive Education Bill of 1896. This naturally received Dr. Clifford's unhesitating and determined opposition. Though carried in its first reading by an overwhelming majority, it suffered a total collapse before the end of three months. In many respects it was similar to the Bill of 1902, but more hesitating and tentative in its operations. £500,000 was to be given to the elementary schools—of which 90 per cent. went to the sectarians. Here was the unblushing endowment of clericalism. The same intention existed then to rob the people of direct control in education by placing its management in the hands of a committee somewhat analogous to the present Education Committee. Still further, the Bill of 1896 practically repealed the Cowper-Temple clause, and opened the door of the nation's schools to the priests and—a doubtful and deceptive advantage—the door of the Anglican schools to Free Churchmen. The opposition was too strong and the Government had to relinquish their plans, but the next year

they managed to give the denominational schools a subsidy of £700,000. Against these proposals Dr. Clifford offered a vigorous protest.

In the same year—1897—he was again leading the Progressive forces in the Metropolis, having, however, only just returned from his tour round the world. In this contest there was greater hope of victory in view of the fact that the Anglicans were divided. Mr. Athelstan Riley and Mr. Diggle recommended different policies, and undoubted confusion reigned in the Churchmen's camp. Moreover, the Progressives were absolutely united. This time, therefore, the triumph proved more complete, and for the first election in twelve years they gained a majority on the Board. Their aggregate vote was 572,624, whilst the Moderates only polled 426,893. Not only did this prove a significant achievement for Progressive principles, but it terminated the religious squabbles which had unhappily distinguished the Board for some time, and enabled the members to devote their energies to solid educational work.

Some apathy existed three years later, but still the Progressives just managed to save the situation. For his share in this election Dr. Clifford received the special thanks of the Progressive members of the Board, through Mr. E. Lyulph Stanley, now Lord Stanley of Alderley, who thus wrote him: "There is a general wish among the members of our party that a formal recognition of your great services during

the recent election is due to you, and I write therefore to express to you their sense of obligation for all you did in the press, in the platform, and in committee to secure the success of the cause of liberal education in London. I hope that the work which we shall do will justify your efforts to return us."

Now, alas! the London School Board has been swept away by the Education Act of 1903. Its services on behalf of education during the past nine or ten years have proved invaluable. The Metropolis has taken its place first amongst other municipalities for regard to the educational equipment of its children, its high standard of teacher, and general educational record.

With the sectarian party barking at its heels, the Government again made an attempt in the Bill of 1901 to damage the Board Schools. Again the country was too strong for them, and again this was withdrawn. On this occasion Dr. Clifford assisted in organising meetings at the Memorial Hall, at which representative Free Churchmen were present, and resolutions deprecatory of the Bill passed with unanimity and enthusiasm. But, as we shall see in the next chapter, the Church party would not allow the Government to rest under this series of defeats, and so perforce we face the insidious enactments of 1902 and 1903.

Thus briefly and rapidly we have glanced at the educational struggles from 1894 to 1901, to show, first,

the extent of Dr. Clifford's share in Progressive educational propaganda. Secondly, to remind each other of the ceaseless sectarian policy of the Church of England and the unblushing manner in which Conservatives and Unionists alike have fostered and promoted it. The significance of history consists in its guidance for future policy. One conclusion is therefore emphatically endorsed by the present review. As Dr. Clifford says, "It leaves us no room to expect anything whatever from the Anglican Church in the direction of amending the Education Acts of 1902 and 1903, so as to recover the lost rights of the citizens, give justice to the teachers in the employment of the State, increase the efficiency of education, and remove the flagrant injustices inflicted on Free Churchmen."

John Bright's words of scorn in the House of Commons concerning the treatment of Nonconformists with respect to education are true to-day. "Dissenters," he said, "are expected always to manifest too much of those inestimable qualities which are spoken of in the Epistle to the Corinthians, 'to hope all things, to believe all things, and to endure all things.'"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EDUCATION ACTS OF 1902 AND 1903

"IT is a painful Bill," said Dr. Clifford to the writer, on the morning succeeding the publication of the text of the Education Bill, 1902. "It is worse than anything I imagined." He had heard Mr. Balfour's exposition in the House, and hoped that the provisions concerning secondary education would have been made compulsory and not permissive, in which case considerable gain to the country must have resulted. Secondary education needed reorganising, and there was a great demand for additional funds. "With regard to elementary education it is most disastrous," he continued. "It is a fresh endowment of sectarianism and a menace to the continuity of the School Board system. If passed, it will make the despotic influence of the Church of England stronger than ever, for it is really a Bill carrying out the programme of the Church party. I regard it as the worst of the five Bills the Conservative Government has introduced. So far as the Free Churches are concerned, I think they will be sure to oppose it, primarily in the interests of

effective education, secondly in the interests of liberty of conscience, and thirdly in the interests of universal justice. The provisions for the introduction of new sectarian schools are most reactionary. They are altogether contrary to the spirit of the age, and must prove inimical to the progress of real religion. I shall be amazed if Free Churchmen do not resist it to the uttermost. I cannot imagine that any one amongst us can defend it."

The accuracy of his rapid diagnosis was amply proved by later events. He had not studied educational systems for many years, nor taken part in the controversies recorded in the previous chapter, without experience of the methods of Conservative Governments in dealing with education. One conclusion stood paramount, however—the determination to fight the Bill at all sacrifices on the public platform and in the public press.

He buckled on the sword immediately—one cannot forswear military terms, for it is a war, and nothing less—and has never laid it aside since. Happily "sword and trowel" have been combined. With the "sword" he has disposed of clerical arguments, and with the "trowel" assisted to build up a strong, healthy opinion amongst Free Churchmen. He has been here, there, and everywhere, from one part of the land to the other. If the demands made upon him were acceded to there must surely have been fifty John Cliffords. His leadership in the fight was quickly demanded. Every great contest must be

personified. Free Trade had its Cobden and Bright. Home Rule its Gladstone. And free and unsectarian education has its Clifford.

A record of the miles he has travelled, of the newspaper columns he has filled, and the number of meetings he has addressed would prove instructive. Mr. Chamberlain could not refer to his campaign with equal credit. Then the enthusiasm which Dr. Clifford has evoked! It needs to be witnessed! No description can adequately express the unbounded welcome he always receives.

The North Leeds bye-election, July, 1902, most significantly revealed his influence in the constituencies. He went down to support Mr. Rowland Barran in the endeavour to transfer a large Conservative majority into a Liberal victory. By friend and foe alike it was agreed that his intervention turned the scale, and North Leeds declared against the Education Bill. Early in the contest the Conservatives appreciated the force and vigour with which he addressed himself to the education controversy. The *Yorkshire Post* and its allied evening paper directed their journalistic shafts against him. They devoted much space to "smart" descriptive comment upon his speeches. They described him in a picturesque passage: "He tub-thumped with much gusto," said the ready writer, "and wound up his harangue with the cheap but melodramatic threat that he would never, never pay the education rate, but would go to prison in the odour of political martyrdom." With

keen relish the Doctor humorously answered these attacks at the public meetings. As his friends know well, nothing stimulates him more than good-tempered criticism. The keen-witted Yorkshiremen were delighted with the duel, and fully recognised that the Baptist leader did not come off second best.

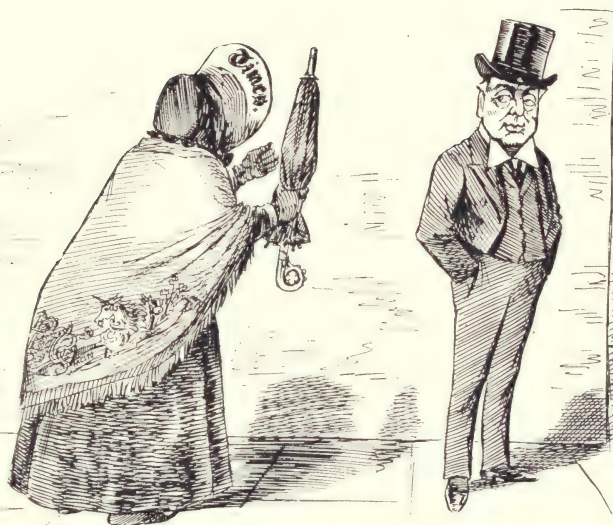
The Sevenoaks election quickly succeeded. He was then taking a "quiet" holiday in Kent, but with much enthusiasm threw himself into the contest. A personal incident is worth recording here. In the midst of the fight he managed to get up to an Education Committee meeting at the Memorial Hall, and I remember meeting him in the lobby bubbling over with high spirits. Speaking of the contest, concerning which he related some encouraging facts, he hoped that no one who was an Englishman and valued the cause of national education would abstain from voting if he was in the country. To do so would be unpatriotic to the last degree. "In fact," he added, with a twinkle and a smile, "if he cannot afford to do so, let him sell his shirt or pawn his hat." Advice which he himself would never refuse to adopt.

In most of the other bye-elections he rendered service, notably in that at Camborne, where Sir Wilfrid Lawson, M.P., succeeded one of Dr. Clifford's oldest friends, Mr. W. S. Caine. A special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* supplied during the election an interesting pen picture of his visit. "The Cornishman," he says, "deposited Dr. Clifford

here at half-past six. At half-past seven he began his speech, finishing shortly after eight. He was then whisked off to a meeting at Redruth, and thence goes back to town again. It was all like a comet flash in rapidity, and everybody knows the phosphorescent brilliance of Dr. Clifford during a transit. He had the meeting burning with a lambent flame before he had uttered half a dozen scintillating sentences. He is very like radium, not only in his power of burning brightly without any apparent effort or wastage, but in the radiating influence he exerts on others. One would have said that if all the houses of Camborne were drained of their adults they would hardly fill the hall in which to-night's meeting was held, but the room was packed with a thousand Cornishmen, and one would not have suspected that the streets of Camborne, which under a cloudy sky seem deserted by everything but the spirit of a drowsy dulness, could have become so suddenly the scene of such hot enthusiasm as when the carriage of Dr. Clifford was surrounded by a crowd hastily deserting the meeting, when he had finished his rousing speech, to cheer him on his way to Redruth. He has been quite the most effective speaker the Liberals have yet had, if answering applause is the standard of the effect of a speech."

It is manifestly impossible—nor is it the object of the present book—to describe in detail the large and important gatherings held in London and the provinces against the Bills of 1902 and 1903. From

A SCOLDING



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"Oh you—you Anarchist. You've made my flesh creep, and I did think better of you, and it all comes of your mixing with that horrid Master Clifford."

("The Times," in a leading article Dec. 9, 1902, on Lord Rosebery's speech to a deputation of Nonconformists at Spencer House, accused him of using language "of a most dangerous tendency," and of giving "a most unnecessary and unjustifiable sanction to the anarchical pretensions of certain irresponsible opponents of the educational policy of the Government.")

the time the National Free Church Council organised that unique meeting in St. James's Hall, April 15, 1902—which practically started the campaign—until the present moment, there has been a succession of conferences, meetings, and deputations, in all of which he has borne a prominent part.

He formed one of the "We-will-not-submit" deputation to Mr. Balfour in the House of Commons, June 12, 1902. He spoke at Spencer House December 8, 1902, when the Free Church leaders met in conference the small band of Liberal peers—including Lord Rosebery—just prior to the Education Bill of 1902 reaching the Upper House. Next morning the *Times* chided Mr. Gladstone's successor for giving "a most unnecessary and unjustifiable sanction to the anarchical pretensions of certain irresponsible opponents of the educational policy of the Government." "F. C. G." admirably hit off the situation the following day by picturing old Mother *Times* scolding Lord Rosebery: "Oh! you—you anarchist! You've made my flesh creep, and I DID think better of you, and it all comes of your mixing with that horrid Master Clifford." That scolding had some point. After the conference broke up, Lord Rosebery passed directly across the room to Dr. Clifford, with whom he had a pleasant chat before leaving Spencer House.

The largest meeting—November, 1902—took place at the Alexandra Palace. There were at least 15,000 inside the Palace, and 3,000 to 5,000 on the

terrace. The feature of the gathering was the extraordinary reception which Dr. Clifford received, and which public men who were present afterwards stated had not been paralleled since Mr. Gladstone retired from public life. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Mr. Asquith obtained hearty and enthusiastic applause, but this was nothing to that given so generously to the Free Church leader.

The Hyde Park demonstration—May, 1903—far exceeded in point of numbers those of the Alexandra Palace. It impressed even clubland, and His Majesty the King himself witnessed Free Churchmen marching by battalions into the Park to protest against an iniquitous Bill. Of the Doctor's share Miss Stoddart ("Lorna") gave a graphic description in the *British Weekly* :—

"At three o'clock on Saturday afternoon the procession is marshalled outside Westbourne Park Baptist Church. The red banner of the P.S.A. is unfurled at the head of the line; behind it are the bandsmen, and on the pavement, welcoming each new comer with cordial hand-grasp, is the hero of the education battle, Dr. Clifford. I can hardly describe how youthful Dr. Clifford looks in his neatly-fitting grey summer suit and round white straw hat. So we have been accustomed to see him on Saturday rambles, but to-day he has sterner work in prospect. There is a blue corn-flower in his buttonhole, and he laughingly draws a pale blue ribbon rosette from his pocket. 'I shall put this on,'

he says, 'when the flower withers.' . . . Our numbers are increasing rapidly ; a hum of happy talk rises as friends exchange greetings, and looks of admiration are directed towards Dr. Clifford as he walks along the line reviewing his gallant army. There is the light of coming victory in his eye, and as the wind brings the colour to his cheeks, who would imagine that the Doctor is sixty-seven? I hear his name a hundred times on the way to the Park, and always mentioned with love and reverence."

II.

Has the Doctor's eloquence or his letters most inspired Free Churchmen? This is a moot point. As we know the letters of public men, from the time of "Junius" downwards, have played an important part in politics. Did not Mr. Gladstone's correspondence on the horrors of the Neapolitan prisons stir the whole of Europe and secure a triumph for the cause of liberty?

Dr. Clifford's letters were admirably timed. A vigorous onslaught against the Bill had been carried on by a sturdy band of Liberals in the House, led by Mr. Bryce and Mr. Lloyd George, and in the country by the National Council. But the summer holidays intervened, and organised opposition naturally subsided. Many leaders were taking a much-needed rest in view of the stern fight ahead. Two or three, however, still stuck to their post, and chief

among these was Dr. Clifford. He was determined that the fight should not cease, and that Free Churchmen should not go to sleep. At the psychological moment, his first letter of a long series appeared in the *Daily News*, August 12, 1902. He started deliberately with the purpose of showing what would be the effect of the Bill, and secondly, to expose the extent of clericalism in British politics revealed by its framing.

Later on he dealt with the following subjects: (1) The primary rights of the people; (2) Liberty of conscience; (3) Constitutional government; (4) Educational efficiency; (5) The true ideal of State education; (6) The welfare of the teaching profession; (7) The rights and service of women; (8) The reputation and usefulness of the English Church; (9) The stability and growth of the Empire; and (10) State education and the use of the Bible. In the second series there appeared the interesting letters between Lord Halifax and himself; the Education Bill and the "no Popery" cry; What is clericalism?; the origin and character of the Education Bill; Cardinal Vaughan and his allies; "Truly Denominational"; and, that "truly denominational" is truly Romanist.

Throughout he has insisted upon the prejudicial effects of clericalism and Romanism upon the State. He dreads few things worse than these twin influences, which after all are but a development of each other. His critics call this intolerance and

bigotry, but his opinions arise from altogether different causes. Against the Roman Catholic personally he bears no animus. He has worked to secure his election on the London County Council. It is the clerical or Romanist system he deprecates, which places the conscience of an individual in the keeping of an ecclesiastical organisation. He objects to Rome being placed on the rates. "Rome on the rates" was a telling phrase. It opened the eyes of even Evangelical Churchmen to the true significance of the Bill.

His replies to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rev. Lord William Gascoyne-Cecil, Canon Hensley Henson, and others have surprised opponents by the ready marshalling of facts and the apt quotation from authorities. His methods are noteworthy. From every corner of England he daily receives data to assist him in this campaign. A friend reads a compromising statement by the Bishop of the diocese. Off it goes to the Doctor. Another correspondent knows a young lady who is refused a post as teacher simply because she is a Nonconformist. A third sends him cuttings respecting Romish teaching and practices by Anglican clergymen. These facts are all carefully verified and pigeon-holed. Appropriate quotations from his extensive reading are also constantly being noted. So the accumulation of telling fact and argument goes on continually. His armoury is never depleted. When clerical opponents attack the Free Church position he is ready with hot shots in reply.

The success of the *Daily News* letters could not be gainsaid. They electrified Free Churchmen and powerfully impressed the electorate. He exposed the measure to a merciless criticism which in detail and complete mastery of the Bill has never been equalled. A well-known member of Parliament wrote him during their appearance: "Your published letters have been quite a revelation to me, and you know what that means to one who has closely followed the Committee stage of the Education Bill in the House of Commons. I am not one who usually takes an exaggerated view of things, but your letters have roused within me the old Puritan spirit that must be in the heart of every true Nonconformist."

Dr. Parker in his last public letter most felicitously expressed the feelings of Free Churchmen with respect to the *Daily News* letters.

"Letters like Dr. Clifford's," wrote the deceased preacher, "are not casually shaken out of a man's coat-sleeve. They are full of knowledge, argument, and experience, and must, by sheer cogency of reasoning, have carried conviction to all open minds. I do not envy the man who, after reading Dr. Clifford's letters, does not admit that the Nonconformists have a strong case, and admit also that the case has been stated with superb ability. As for Dr. Clifford's energy, it is simply phenomenal. He must be about sixty-six years old according to the lying calendar, but in point of intellectual alertness, physical endurance, and unquenchable enthusiasm,

he cannot be much more than six-and-twenty—six-and-thirty at the very utmost. London must make more of Dr. Clifford than even yet it has done. He is a born champion, a slashing fighter, and a hearty lover of all bloodless combat. Some of us may perhaps sit on the fence and watch how the fight is going, but the intrepid Clifford is instantly in the midst of the battle, and there is no mistaking the length and weight of his desperate sword. . . .

“I could not say less about my friend’s noble letters without feeling that I was guilty of criminal silence. *Liberavi meam animam.*”

But the most significant testimony to the value of the letters came from Mr. Balfour himself. This was in the form of a strawberry-coloured pamphlet with the title, “Letter from the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, M.P., on the criticisms of an opponent of the Education Bill, 1902.” To say the least it was significant that the Premier could spare valuable time from State affairs, then so pressing, to answer a “divine preoccupied more with politics than with either religion or education,” whose “style” was not likely “even among the least critical members of the community to produce more than a passing perturbation.” Why then the fact of publication? “My dear Mr. Middleton”—who occupied the post of chief organiser to the Conservative party—knew better than his superior the effect which Dr. Clifford’s letters had already produced in the country. But Mr. Balfour contradicted himself. “It can hardly be counted a

waste of time," he urges elsewhere, "to devote a few pages to the consideration of so important a masterpiece," and later on admits the influence of Dr. Clifford's pamphlet—a reprint of several letters—"The Fight against the Education Bill") which he explains has "circulated by hundreds of thousands," and "has supplied the text of innumerable sermons."

How gleefully and forcefully Dr. Clifford replied to the Premier we all know.

III.

Dr. Clifford's "style" has been considerably abused by opponents. Much of this criticism is a parrot-like echo of Mr. Balfour's remarks and counts for little, though even here and there a Free Churchman may be deceived by it. It is suggested that he is too "strenuous," that his speeches are altogether too vehement—not to say militant. How history repeats itself! Even John Bright had a "dig" at Robert William Dale, because of similar traits. At a great meeting held in Birmingham he repeated a remark of Mr. Muntz who had said to him, "What a fine fellow Dale is! I never listen to him without thinking of the Church militant." Mr. Bright intended it as a gentle reproof for the vigour with which Dale, who preceded him, had attacked the Act of 1870 and its author. The Quaker, so we are told, "felt that Dale, in questions for which he greatly cared, was apt to be too dogmatic, too uncompromising. But the audience, proud of their leader,



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THE MODERN JOHN KNOX.

ignored the remonstrance and cheered the eulogy to the echo." Speaking of Dale's strenuousness his biographer wrote, "While the strife lasted he threw himself into it with no half-hearted zeal. If he despised any one, it was the man who doubted whether his principles were worth fighting for. He himself fought, not with the graces of the fencing school, but with the chivalry and passion of the battlefield."

Exactly Dr. Clifford's position. How can he do anything else but fight strenuously? This is not an academic battle, he urges, but a real fight for the supremacy of religious and political freedom. Therefore he adopts the tactics of General Grant, who said, "Get close to your enemy and hit him." It was the same spirit which prompted Charles Haddon Spurgeon to say on one occasion, "Do not talk to me of mild and gentle men, of soft manners and squeamish words; we want the fiery Knox, and even though his vehemence should 'ding our pulpits into blads,' it were well if he did but rouse our hearts to action." Most happily "F. C. G." of the *Westminster Gazette* has applied the title "The Modern John Knox" to Dr. Clifford in one of his inimitable cartoons—here reproduced—undoubtedly the best caricature of the former which has appeared.

It will be remembered that Canon Hensley-Henson in the *Times* called in question the Doctor's "style" after the Baptist Union Assembly at Derby last year,

and endeavoured to enlist Dr. Guinness Rogers on his side. But the veteran educationist would have none of it. "In all honesty," the latter replied, "I am bound to say that I find in it nothing that seems to me stronger than the censure passed by the Bishop of Hereford on the action of his brethren. It must be remembered that the judgment is passed not upon men, but upon a policy, and on men only as they are responsible for it. Nonconformists make no attacks upon Bishops or clergy, but simply upon the clericalism of their educational policy."

The reason for Dr. Clifford's "fire" is the same as with Knox. He is consumed with the passion for rousing the consciences of his brother Nonconformists. Neither personal motive nor ill-will against Anglicans tincture his actions. There may be great vehemence but there is no bitterness, as Dean Stanley once remarked of Gladstone. Apart from the colouring essential to every telling oration, the stern facts are easily distinguishable in Dr. Clifford's speeches. An "essential" has never been successfully assailed by his critics. With much care and at considerable trouble he collects his data, and when quoting an authority usually gives the *ipsissima verba*. Neither Lord Halifax, nor Mr. H. W. Hill, the secretary of the English Church Union, it may be presumed, will again so readily express their delight at his supposed discomfiture, because at the moment he did not produce his authority for a statement. Nor perhaps will Mr. Hill a second time go so far as to

reply to Dr. Clifford's assurance of *bona fides*, in such discourteous style as the sentence, "Here I leave Dr. Clifford. To pursue him further would not be sport, and the result would not be game." The apology of Lord Halifax after all only emphasised the Doctor's prudence in statement.

Another point sometimes urged against Dr. Clifford is his uncompromising attitude towards opponents. But a careful analysis of his speeches shows that his strongest indictment is obtained from men in the opposite camp to himself, exactly as Dr. Guinness Rogers suggests. He exposes the demands of the Church of England upon the public purse by quoting the historic speech of the Bishop of Hereford, in which his lordship referred to the "game of grab." When proving that the Education Acts are designed for the sake of two or three favoured Churches he produces Mr. Balfour's statement that everything was subordinated to making the schools of the nation "truly denominational." Under these circumstances surely Dr. Clifford is justified in stating that such statesmanship is "sectarian, bigoted, partisan and intolerant." These are only typical instances picked out here and there from a host of others.

In a great issue like the education controversy it is the merest pettifogging for dilettante people to talk of "style." Horatius did not keep the bridge that led to Rome in lavender kid gloves. Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons said of

Cobden: "Agree you may in his general politics, or you may not; complain you may, if you think you have cause, of the mode and force with which in the freedom of debate he commonly states his opinions in this House. But it is impossible for us to deny that those benefits of which we are now acknowledging the existence are, in no small part at any rate, due to the labours in which he has borne so prominent a share." This is exactly the Free Churchman's position with respect to Dr. Clifford and the fight against the Education Acts.

Ask the Nonconformist press what its editors think of Dr. Clifford's lead in this struggle, and what is the answer? "He has assisted Free Churchmen to rediscover their consciences." Ask the electorate, and a well-known Liberal organiser from Parliament Street replies, "The people simply howl for Clifford all over the country. He could speak at twenty meetings a night if he wished, whilst even now he is doing the work of fifty young men." Ask the rank and file amongst the Nonconformist Churches, and Acocks Green Congregational Church replies, by a unanimous resolution passed October 1, 1902:—

"We, the members of the Congregational Church worshipping at Acocks Green, near Birmingham, desire by this resolution to express our high appreciation of the noble work done by you in the emancipation of the ideas of our fellow-countrymen in respect of education and religion in this crisis of

our country's affairs. May we be permitted to say that for us you have pioneered the way of progress with a singleness of purpose, an ardour, and an exhaustless devotion, which brings every lover of freedom to your side.

"You have fought the battle of liberty with a large heart and a beautiful courtesy.

"You have made progress on certain lines inevitable; you have made many hitherto impracticable things possible; and the wide and glorious outlines of the kingdom of God in human affairs are clearer to all of us by reason of your vision and your courage.

"We do not think you need the assurances of any man, or body of men, about the rightness of your course (a leader has his compensations from other sources), but it is in our hearts to say 'Well done!' and we think you will be none the worse for hearing it."

If it were necessary to produce other evidence, there is no lack. Leading Liberal statesmen, members of Parliament, ministers of all the Free Churches and Nonconformist assemblies in the Colonies have testified to the value of his work. One of his highest honours was received on February 23, 1902, when the National Liberal Club, under the presidency of Earl Carrington, entertained him to dinner in conjunction with Mr. Herbert Samuel, M.P., who had increased the Liberal majority at Cleveland, and Mr. C. D. Rose,

M.P., who wrested Newmarket from the Conservatives.

Perhaps it is only natural that he has not escaped unfair criticism and ill-natured abuse. The columns of the *Church Times* abundantly testify to this fact. "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican," is the text which its editor applies to him! As Dr. Robertson Nicoll so aptly said on the occasion of the uncharitable remark, "One cannot help thinking that if Dr. Clifford had been a publican in the modern sense, and not, as he is, a great Christian minister, he would have received very different treatment from his adversaries. Mr. Balfour, in particular, would have listened to him with bated breath and whispering humbleness. He would have had no complaint to make either of his literary style or his moral health. He would not have spoken to Dr. Clifford with his chin in the air, as if all the smells of Constantinople were under his nose."

But this is not all. The number of violent and vulgar messages on post-cards, and the petty annoyance conceived by sending to his residence parcels of rubbish with the carriage unpaid, are almost inconceivable to the ordinary man of honour. The cause of Anglicans is certainly not ennobled or improved by such methods and manners. Neither, at the same time, do they affect the Free Church leader whom they are designed to annoy. He is proof against all such spiteful pettiness.

IV.

From the first he has opposed hasty compromise. We did not commence the battle, he says, and simply stand on the defensive. Other issues have also been raised which now require settlement. The rights of popular control have been invaded, whilst the insertion of religious tests in Civil Service appointments has entirely confined the latter to one section of the citizens. The Anglicans have forced Mr. Balfour and his Government to deprive a large portion of the nation of its rights and privileges. We must appeal to Cæsar! In the past, Nonconformists have suffered wrongs on the instalment system, and these wrongs are now fetters. Openly and wantonly attacked, are we to retreat or capitulate? "We dare not! We must not!" exclaims Dr. Clifford. He holds that the time to talk of adjustments is after a Liberal Government is installed in office, and when, in due course, Liberal ministers deal with the question. But even then such agreements must only affect details rather than principles. First, we must have complete popular control of all elementary schools supported by the State. Secondly, the abolition of sectarian tests amongst teachers paid out of national funds.

For these reasons he viewed with suspicion the Fulham Conference arranged by the Bishop of London in 1902. In fact, at first he decided not to attend it, and only agreed to do so after

receipt of a telegram from Mr. W. Illingworth, the Chairman of the Northern Counties Education League, urging him to accompany their secretary, the Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell. Dr. Clifford felt convinced that the Bishops and the Anglican laymen would not agree to satisfactory concessions. Nor did they. None of their proposals approached a settlement of the two vital conditions just outlined, and the Conference ended without agreement.

It is significant that proposals for compromise are never made to him, though essentially the uncrowned leader of Nonconformity, and no settlement is possible without his acquiescence. The Archbishop of Canterbury goes elsewhere! Only to find, however, that the Clifford influence is too strong for him.

AN EDUCATIONAL MODEL.



By kind permission of the "Westminster Gazette."

LORD HUGH: There, Father, that's the Church and that's the School, and there's a covered way from the School to the Church. You see there are only two doors to the Schoolhouse, one the children go in by and the other they come out by, and it leads right into the Church. Isn't it lovely?

LORD S.: Capital, but what's that objectionable building in the corner there?

LORD HUGH: Oh, that's the Chapel. It belongs to an opposite religion, as you once said; I've got Clifford and Price Hughes bottled up there. They're not half bad chaps, but they don't like it, for you see the children that go into the school can't get out into the Chapel, they *must* go into the Church.

LORD S. (admiringly): What a clever boy you are, Hughie!

CHAPTER XIX

PASSIVE RESISTANCE

DR. DALE, who was the leader of the Nonconformist revolt in 1870, and one of the Liberal members of the Birmingham School Board, in company with Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., Mr. George Dawson, Mr. George Dixon and Mr. J. S. Wright, refused to honour the power of the Board to pay the fees of poor children at the denominational schools in the town. The Town Council also acted with the Liberal minority. A mandamus was obtained to enforce the provisions of the Act ; but so strong was public opinion that the Board were afraid to put their byelaw in force. At the outset of the controversy Dr. Dale took up a most uncompromising attitude. "Not even at the bidding of a Liberal ministry," he said, "will we consent to any proposition which, under cover of an educational measure, empowers one religious denomination to levy a rate for teaching its creed and maintaining its worship. On this point compromise or concession is impossible. Our minds are made up ; our decision is irrevocable. We

respect Mr. Forster—we honour Mr. Gladstone ; but we are determined that England shall not again be cursed with the bitterness and strife from which we hoped we had for ever escaped by the abolition of the Church rate.”

This firm front at Birmingham—then in its heyday as the leader of civic and educational progress—settled this obnoxious impost at the expense of the School Boards.

The rigorous determination of Mr. Balfour to closure discussion in the House, the jubilant tone of the Unionist and clerical press, and the manifest impotence of the Liberal members to pulverise the Bill of 1902, made it imperative for Free Churchmen to consider their prospective position when it passed into law. Mr. George White, M.P., the president of the Baptist Union, first publicly took the same ground as Dr. Dale in 1870. Without qualification Dr. Robertson Nicoll endorsed the suggestion in the columns of the *British Weekly*, with a brilliance, force, and lucidity which immediately rallied Free Churchmen to the standard thus raised. From the first Dr. Nicoll perceived that Passive Resistance would create a renaissance of Nonconformity. He told the writer at the early stages of the movement that one of the resultant effects must prove the uprising of a new race of Nonconformists tested by sacrifice, with convictions firm and purpose undaunted ; who were superior to social conditions and ready to face the consequences of conscience.

Dr. Nicoll accurately gauged the situation. To-day there is a distinct revival of Puritan spirit, and thousands in the country are ready to say in the spirit of Browning with respect to Passive Resistance :—

“Was it then all child’s play, make-believe and mumming?

No, we battled it like men; not boy-like sulked and whined;

Each of us heard cláng God’s ‘Come,’ and each was coming,
Soldiers all to forward face; not sneaks to lag behind.”

Dr. Robertson Nicoll, writing to the editor of the *Baptist Argus* of Kentucky, eulogised Dr. Clifford’s share in the movement.

“While the fight was going on in Parliament,” he wrote, “many honoured leaders imagined that it might be possible by normal methods to break down the Bill. The great protagonist in the fight was Dr. Clifford. He did more than any man to rouse public attention to the intense gravity of the struggle. It was he who took the chief part in the by-elections which went so largely in favour of the Liberals. The successful Liberal candidates owed their victory to him more than to any other man. It was natural that Dr. Clifford, who has always been very influential, should spring into a national position, and to-day he is deservedly the hero of the Nonconformists, and I might say of the Liberal party, the best and the bravest and the most influential among them all. When, in spite of all protest, the iniquitous Bill became an Act, Dr. Clifford took up actively the Passive Resistance movement.

“How he has laboured in that cause I may best show by relating a little incident. At the meetings of the National Free Church Council at Brighton, Dr. Clifford mentioned to me that it was difficult for the National Passive Resistance Committee to provide all the speakers demanded from all quarters of the country, and asked if I could undertake some work. ‘You see,’ he said very quietly, ‘I am not able to manage more than four meetings a week. I have the care of my Church.’ When it is considered that Dr. Clifford’s Church is one of the largest in London, with innumerable organisations, and that he never allows himself to take his hand from anything, you will appreciate the sacrifice involved in addressing four meetings a week, and taking the long railway journeys.”

Dr. Clifford outside Passive Resistance is an unthinkable proposition! A leopard cannot change its spots, nor can the Doctor belie those early traditions into which he was nurtured, and which he learnt both from his mother and grandmother. The early stalwarts at the little Sawley Baptist Chapel had been pilloried, covered with blood and treated with ignominy and contempt. He venerated their memory. Not for one moment could he, or would he, think of disloyalty to their faith and testimony. The small group of leaders who met together in a City tea-shop appointed him chairman of the Passive Resistance Committee, and immediately set to work to organise Free Churchmen throughout the

country. It needed but little organisation. There was a spontaneous uprising which the Committee but focussed and represented.

Passive Resistance made heavy demands upon his time, and associated him with many interesting incidents. There was the occasion of the first sale, held at Wirksworth, June 25, 1903. A telegram reached him at two o'clock in the morning, urging him to be present at the distraint sale, which took place at nine o'clock, and he gladly complied. I saw him at the close of the day, and found that after two or three hours' sleep he had caught the first train out of town, and arrived at Matlock sometime before nine. Then he was three and a half miles from Wirksworth. As the train service proved inconvenient, he chartered a cab and reached the place of sale only a quarter of an hour after this had commenced. Certainly not a bad performance for an old man of sixty-seven! Disturbed from his sleep, he undertook a journey of 141 miles at three hours' notice, spoke at an open-air demonstration, and returning to town, was at the Westbourne Park Institute for his customary Friday evening consultation. This occupied at least three hours, for many people wanted to see him, and he reached home by ten o'clock.

Another sale scene! It was an oppressive summer afternoon, and the auction of Passive Resistant's goods had been arranged to take place in a low-pitched, narrow building, which became inconveniently crowded almost as soon as the police

opened the doors. Indescribable confusion quickly ensued, and when the auctioneer appeared the place was a regular pandemonium. There were only a handful of Resistants, but the populace had come to express indignation against the auctioneer and the proceedings generally. Then amidst it all Dr. Clifford arrived, looking quite cool and cheerful in a light summer suit. Tumultuous cheers arose, repeated again and again. At the hour of commencement the auctioneer essayed to start, but it was futile. He could not shout against fifty. Starting badly, he had refused to offer first the five or six lots belonging to the Resistants, and proposed to deal with fifty or sixty lots belonging to other clients. This meant that the Resistants, included amongst whom were several well-known Baptist ministers and laymen, must wait in the stifling atmosphere for an hour or more until the auctioneer reached their lots. The crowd became angry, and "booed" and called him names. If he had not been protected by stalwart policemen, some of those present would most probably have swept him off his rostrum. One instinctively recognised the spirit of the assemblage.

The auctioneer raised his voice until red in the face, but all to no avail. There was a dumb show of an auction sale in progress — not without its humorous aspect—and nothing else. It seemed a perfect *impasse*. Everybody was excited except Dr. Clifford. He stood upon the rostrum to the right of the auctioneer, and rested one arm lightly on a

policeman's shoulder, just to steady his insecure footing. I think he had a twinkle in his eye, for on that warm summer day the scene proved as good as a farce. When he thought it had proceeded far enough he said to those around him, "Hadn't I better say something?" and then raising his hand he started, "My friends." He obtained an instantaneous hearing. A few good-humoured words to the crowd, and a tactful appeal to the auctioneer caused the latter to reverse his former order, and presently the sale was proceeding quickly if not too pleasantly.

A third incident. This deserves to live as one of the most lamentable sequels of the passing of the Education Act of 1902. During his summer holiday at Eastbourne he visited Mr. Baker, Arches Farm, Ringmer, Sussex, whose goods, to the value of £50 at least, had been seized for a sum of 15s., because he had refused to pay the sectarian rate. The scene at the farmstead will live in Dr. Clifford's memory for many a day. Lest his countrymen forget, he pictured it in a graphic letter to the *Daily News* to which he gave the title, "A Sheaf of the Bishop's Harvest." It was an apt description that Passive Resistants will do well to remember.

In one passage he described the complete desolation in the house.

"'Where do you live?' I asked; and we were taken into the kitchen, and there I saw on a table a large heap of clothes, of linen and dresses, that the

men had taken out of the wardrobe and tumbled on the floor. But though they lived in the kitchen they were not left with chairs enough to accommodate the whole family !

"What an impressive lesson is this for the children of the family !" Dr. Clifford added. "Will it be surprising if, like their parents, they embrace the Baptist faith, and reproduce the courage of their father and mother ? The youngest little maid, quite a child, having a small coin given her, was starting off for Lewes to buy a couch for the invalid visitor who had been using it ; and an older girl, finding a strip of carpet left, took it and spread it out by the side of her mother's bed ! "

His correspondence every morning has borne eloquent tribute to the long list of illegalities and injustices which have followed the passing of the Education Bill. "Men and women," he says, "aged and saintly men and women, rich men and poor men, men in crowded towns and in remote rural districts, twos and threes, and hundreds, married women and spinsters, have appeared in law courts, often to be browbeaten by magistrates, insulted by town clerks, overseers ; and policemen. Working men have lost a day's work in addition to paying seven or eight shillings, where the sectarian rate only amounted to as many pence, rather than disobey the mandate of conscience."

The last episode. The all-day gatherings in the City Temple in the autumn of 1903 gave some

TO MAKE IT WORK



By kind permission of the "Westminster Gazette."

LORD HUGH (with School-cum-Church model): Put a penny in the slot, Dr. Clifford, and the model will work.

DR. CLIFFORD: I'm not going to put a penny in, and I don't want to see it work.

LORD HUGH: Pa and Cousin Arthur will *make* you make it work.

indication of the strength of the movement. It also revealed the intensity of enthusiasm amongst the adherents and their appreciation of the leader. A well-known London journalist in his London Letter thus picturesquely described the chairman's share in those memorable proceedings :—

“A first-rate fighting man is at the head of the Passive Resistance movement. Dr. Clifford is the Joseph Chamberlain of Nonconformity. The Rev. R. J. Campbell said, if he outlived him, he would place his name on the walls of the Temple beside the names of John Wesley and Oliver Cromwell. I have never, since Mr. Gladstone's death, witnessed any audience so deeply stirred by any man as this audience was to-night by Dr. Clifford. Imagine the slim, thin figure, and on the narrow shoulders a great head. In the face you find a concentration of zeal and pugnacity. The brown beard is rapidly becoming grey, but the eyes behind the spectacles are terribly keen, the voice of the orator is strong, and when he waxes eloquent and puts up his arms and flings back his head he looks like a giant. When he stepped on the platform he got a reception which might have satisfied Mr. Chamberlain. The vast audience rose and cheered and waved handkerchiefs. Dr. Clifford stood facing the crowd with unmoved countenance. ‘Hymn No. 7,’ he bluntly said, when silence was secured. ‘Not much emotion there,’ I remarked to a neighbour. ‘Ah!’ said he, ‘you don't know Clifford; he is so moved he dare not show his

emotion.' The speech as a whole was a marvellous effort of inspiring oratory. He described the resistance movement as the revolt of conscience against the intrusion of Parliament, and he was tremendously applauded when he urged 'No surrender.' His closing appeal, delivered with intensity, 'To your arms, O Israel, and God defend the right !' brought the whole audience to its feet again."

In the earlier stages of the movement, and before Counsel's opinion was obtained concerning its legality, Dr. Clifford told the writer he had satisfied himself that, technically speaking, resistance to the payment of any portion of the rates could be construed into "conspiracy." This at least he had learnt from study for his LL.B., therefore he was not surprised when Mr. Robson, K.C., M.P., and Mr. Montague Lush, K.C., issued their "opinion" upon the subject. He did not consider the arguments of "Mr. Legality" for one moment. To him Passive Resistance was a religious question, of which the State could have no cognisance. "The religion of conscience," he says, "does not wait the bidding of committees or heed the crack of the whip of bishops. It acts instinctively, spontaneously, and with the swiftness and certainty of law." They had no option, therefore, but to take their stand with ancestors in the faith, "who suffered countless ills, who battled for the true, the just."

Lord Lindley did not possess any terrors for him. The late Master of the Rolls, in addressing the grand

jury of the Norfolk Quarter Sessions, October, 1903, hinted that any organised opposition to the enforcement of the law was an indictable conspiracy, and Passive Resisters might easily find themselves caught in the meshes of the Criminal Law. In replying to this judicial statement, Dr. Clifford urged that Judge Lindley's deliverance brought no fresh information to Passive Resisters. That condition of things had been fully considered, and Lord Lindley's view would not affect their action. He had said that they were misled by false analogies. Was it, asked Dr. Clifford, "a false analogy to cite the Conventicle Act, the Five Mile Act, the Test Acts, and similar instruments of ecclesiastical tyranny resisted to the extent of going to prison by our illustrious predecessors? Those Acts were 'legally valid,' and they were bravely resisted, to the eternal advantage of British freedom, British peace, and British progress."

He has also explained another aspect of Passive Resistance, appealing to his love of liberty and equality. "I am resolutely opposed," he says, "to any man, a Mahometan or Methodist, a Ritualist or a Romanist, a Quaker or a Baptist, being made to suffer in the slightest degree for his religious opinions. In my fixed conviction those opinions are entirely outside the functions of the State. Parliament has nothing whatever to do with them. I am as strongly opposed to the establishment by Parliament of what is called "undenominational teaching," as I am to Romanism; *i.e.*, I

protest with all my might against teaching at the expense of the ratepayers a set of dogmatic theological opinions on which Christians generally are supposed to be agreed, as I protest against the teaching of any distinctively Roman or Anglican doctrine. I wish theological dogma to be taught, but taught by the Churches, and entirely at the expense of the Churches ; and not by the officers of Parliament, and at the expense of the ratepayers. I have fought for Roman Catholics in municipal and Parliamentary contests. I shall again. What I oppose is anybody's effort to *compel* me to pay for the propagation of Romanist or any other Church doctrines, or to use the Parliament of the people for that purpose. Against that I have battled, and will whilst I have breath, for I am sure it cannot be right for me to force one citizen to pay another for calling him a 'schismatic,' assuring him that 'he has committed a very grievous sin in forsaking the services of Westminster Abbey or Westbourne Park Chapel,' and that his preachers are all unauthorised, that his 'Church' is no Church of Christ at all, and that if he gets to heaven at last it will be on some broken raft, and not on a good Church ship. No, I do not think you ought to force me to pay for that ; and if you try, you will discover that you have for once undertaken an impossibility.

"But that is precisely what this Act is doing for Romanism. Romanist schools are on the rates. I do not complain. They have a right to be there

according to the law. Romanist training colleges are on the rates. Notices are printed in the papers announcing new schools for 'teaching the doctrines of the Roman Catholic denomination.' For educational work they are not needed ; there are places in other schools where the Roman Catholic atmosphere does not exist ; but the Romanists have abundant money, and they are erecting new schools and applying to the educational authorities to have them recognised as public elementary schools, and to place them upon the rates. The Romanists are not lacking in wisdom or wealth, and no doubt within the next few years these schools will spring up in great abundance.

"Is it surprising that the Passive Resistance Movement grows? Would it not be astonishing if legislation so diametrically opposed to the eternal principles of justice and liberty, of democracy and progress, did not stir every reflective Englishman to do his utmost to accomplish its removal at the earliest possible moment, and many others to say, come what will, 'We will not submit'?"

With signal clearness events have determined the wisdom of the Passive Resistance campaign. Were it not for this, opposition to the Education Acts must have been snowed under Fiscal oratory, which has descended upon the nation in an apparently ceaseless downpour. Whether Mr. Chamberlain's object was to hide the sins of the Government or to herald his new departure as an Imperial missionary, there can be

little doubt that Nonconformists would have proved as those crying in the wilderness but for Passive Resistance. The fact that to-day Free Church men and women have appeared before the magistrates rather than pay an obnoxious impost, and, in addition, allowed their possessions to be sold at loss and inconvenience, affords convincing proof that Mr. Chamberlain has been unable to weaken their irrevocable decision to fight on and resist until the repeal of sectarian education is obtained.

Dr. Clifford says, "Fight to the end." With ten thousand "Amens," Free Churchmen endorse this spirited advice.

WHO KILLED THE SCHOOL BOARD?



By kind permission of the "Westminster Gazette."

Who'll intervene?

I said the Doctor,
I'll be the Proctor,
I'll intervene.

Who will avenge it?
We, said the crowd,
In Hyde Park aloud,
We will avenge it.

A CLIMB DOWN



By kind permission of the "Westminster Gazette."

THE COON: Say, Doctor, I came down here before you brought your gun.

DR. CLIFFORD: Yes. I guess you saw me coming. You'd better come all the way down right away and scoot.

CHAPTER XX

SOME OF HIS CONTEMPORARIES

ALMOST every Free Church pulpit in London has changed its minister since Dr. Clifford settled in Praed Street, in 1858. He was, therefore, in touch with an older generation of preachers equally as to-day he is with a younger race. When he came to London some of the foremost were Dr. Brock, a dignified and courtly minister of the Baptist Church; Dr. Landels, able and keen in debate; Morley Punshon, the prince of Methodist preachers; and Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who had only just commenced his life-work at Park Street. Then amongst his friends of a later period should be named Henry Ward Beecher, Dr. Dale, Dr. Parker, Hugh Price Hughes, Dr. Guinness Rogers, Dr. Jabez Burns—to name but a few.

Dr. Landels was the chief of the "Fraternal" in North-West London, to which the Doctor belonged. One of the primary occupations at these gatherings was to report the texts and supply the outlines of the sermons preached on the previous Sunday, and then

seize on the most controversial subject. "In this Dr. Landels was always at home," says Dr. Clifford. "He was an unsparing critic of books, sermons and men. I remember telling him I was prepared to be 'scalped' by him at any time ; it was such a delight to see the clean and effective way in which the entire covering was removed, and the subsidiary support left bare as a billiard ball."

When Henry Ward Beecher was over here Dr. Clifford saw much of him. Describing his characteristics, the latter says: "I am sure his supreme desire was to be obedient to the heavenly vision and to follow the heavenly voice. His power was enormous in the life of the people of the States—greater than that of any man who has wrought in the life of this century, unless we except Lincoln, and it was a power exerted on their intellectual and social life in all its departments and divisions. He was the champion of the outcast, the deliverer of the slave, the Moses of the New Theology, the typical preacher of the New Democracy—daring to face and denounce its pet errors and cherished vices, because his love of men was so deep and strong and full. His power was not an 'unearned increment,' but the result of accretion. His was a steep climb, up rugged and pain-inflicting heights ; but he dared the road and wrought out his life-task with a pure independence and a sublime faith."

Between Dr. Parker and Dr. Clifford there was a complete bond of union. In many respects they

differed, but absolute confidences were maintained between them for many years, and on numerous occasions Dr. Clifford has taken the service at the City Temple. As mentioned later, the last public epistle written by the eloquent Congregationalist eulogised his friend not only as a letter-writer but as a sick-visitor. When the great shadow came across Joseph Parker's home, we know how deeply he sorrowed. The glimpse of pessimism he revealed on the first Thursday he preached after the death of his wife will scarcely be forgotten by those who heard him. In this strain he also wrote to Dr. Clifford, but then one gladly notes that "morning is on its way," as he poetically phrases it.

"My dear friend," he said, "I dare not think of joining you on Monday. I am quite shattered. This horrible darkness I cannot endure. 'An enemy hath done this,' is all I can think. I will wait. Perhaps morning is on its way. I never was so near being an Atheist, but I am clinging hard to the side of faith. It is a mortal struggle.

"Love to you all. Keep together as long as you can, and let all, in home and Church, be done in love. Ever yours, Joseph Parker."

At the Midland Baptist College the young Banbury preacher served the tutors as an object-lesson to the students against adopting similar eccentricities and oddities. When Dr. Parker succeeded to the Poultry Chapel, Dr. Clifford was then at Praed Street, and

was amongst the earliest to listen to his original epigrammatic and thought-inspiring teaching. At this time, however, the former had not passed the period peculiar to most people who heard Joseph Parker for the first time. He was more intent upon criticising the latter's methods than duly appreciating his matter. At length they were brought face to face, and twenty years before his death, as Dr. Clifford says, "I came to know him as a friend, and found the key to the interpretation of his character and work. It was in the revealing relations of friendship, in the clear light of affectionate intercourse, the clouds were lifted and I saw that he was a 'great human,' the greatest, take him all in all, it has yet been my lot to know."

"In the very last interview I had with Dr. Parker, only a little while before his death," Dr. Clifford continues, "we were chatting as we had often done on a favourite theme, the cost of preaching to the preacher—and he referred to a style of preaching in which in notable instances it tended to longevity, and through the revealing emphasis with which he could charge a word, flashed out the sentence, 'Such preaching was dental'; it was, as Carlyle would say, 'from the teeth outwards,' it lacked passion, intensity, heat, glow, and power, and then with that inevitable movement of his mind towards a Biblical investiture for his thought, added, 'Without shedding of blood there is no—preaching—no real preaching.'"

Dr. Parker and Dr. Clifford were both members of

the "X.," a social club consisting of five Baptist and five Congregational ministers, and in this way often met at each other's homes.

Mr. Price Hughes and Dr. Clifford were comrades in arms. Did they not fight together for the dockers' "tanner," and against privileged vice, and in many another campaign for the social betterment of their fellows? Social Christianity stirred their deepest souls and gave them courage for chivalrous fight. On purely ecclesiastical matters, and also on some phases of the Education question, they differed. Dr. Clifford never ventured to hope that the Grindelwald "picnics" would pave the way to the reunion of Christendom. All reunion proposals seem a farce to him if they do not commence with equality. He gladly admitted the friendly spirit in which the Swiss Conferences were conducted, and the opportunities for mutual knowledge. Their practical effect he doubted. With respect to education Mr. Hughes was in some respects a Denominationalist. He believed that the State, at the public expense, could teach the Apostle's Creed, and even the rudimentary forms of Christianity professed by the principal denominations—in effect to endow Anglicanism, Methodism, Romanism, Calvinism, and every other "ism." Dr. Clifford, as already explained in a previous chapter, differs *in toto*. And when Mr. Hughes attempted a concordat upon the lines of the Apostle's Creed, Dr. Clifford promptly wrote to the press disowning the proposal, and undoubtedly Noncon-

formist opinion remained with him and not with Mr. Hughes.

These points of difference between them, though always pronounced, never affected their friendship. In all other Free Church issues they were in complete accord, and worked together in thorough harmony.

In 1888 Mr. Hughes wrote a particularly friendly note in the *Methodist Times* concerning the work at Westbourne Park. "In order to appreciate the truth of the present flourishing condition of his Church," he said, "one must spend at least a week at Westbourne Park. And any one who does so will find the President-elect of the Baptist Union as modest and kindly on close acquaintance as he is devoted and eminent in his public work. Of course our three-years' system prevents any such establishment existing in the Methodist Church. But the facts of the case, which must be known to be appreciated, from poor old Praed Street Chapel, thirty years ago, to the present splendid edifice, congregation and institute, assuredly show what may be done by a devoted man where he is not compelled to throw away triennially that most precious of all his possessions, a strong and holy personal influence. It is a splendid testimony to the possibilities of Divine grace in human nature that a man in such position should be able to say, 'I have had no difficulty with officers and people except from the tyranny of their love.' Such centres of vigorous Christian life are the hope of the future of our cities."

When Mr. Hughes was President of the Wesleyan Conference in 1898, Dr. Clifford wrote a letter full of kind wishes, which reached the former during the meetings at Hull. Mr. Hughes replied: "I have been overwhelmed with telegrams, letters, and work, and have had no earlier opportunity of stating how greatly I appreciated your communication, both in your personal capacity and as the president of the National Council. I am very grateful for the movement which has brought me so frequently into association and fellowship with yourself. I took the liberty of mentioning to the Conference when receiving the deputation of the Evangelical Free Church Council of this neighbourhood that I had received a communication from you, and your name was received with hearty applause, as is always the case in any Methodist meeting."

No eulogy on a departed minister could have exceeded in charm and deep sympathy that which Dr. Clifford delivered at Westbourne on the Sunday after Mr. Hughes' sudden "call." It appreciated not only his striking personal qualities, but also the deep and abiding significance of his work for Methodism, in loosing it from the grave-clothes of a stereotyped system so that it could undertake a great missionary forward movement.

It can scarcely be said that Dr. Clifford was on terms of intimate friendship with Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Their theological standpoint was so dissimilar. But they sincerely appreciated each other's

work and character, and often associated in earlier days at meetings of the London Baptist Association, or on occasions when Mr. Spurgeon was his host. The latter took part in the re-opening service at Praed Street, after its enlargement in 1872. Dr. Clifford says to-day he remembers that amongst the precious things Mr. Spurgeon said to him were, "Preach to convert souls, and the Lord will not disappoint you. We get what we expect." Mr. Spurgeon also went to Westbourne Park to open a bazaar, and as Dr. Clifford adds, "characteristically used the occasion as an opportunity for quickening the faith and zeal of the disciples of Christ and beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God."

Dr. Clifford differed widely and deeply from the pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle concerning the Down Grade controversy, but this never changed his admiration for the latter's ministry. When he passed away the Doctor said, "The worn warrior lays down his sword—a sword trusted in a thousand fights for God and right and truth, and says, 'I have fought the good fight.' One can hardly read it without a choking at the throat; but at once we feel the great utterances are true of our nineteenth-century Paul as they were of the apostle of the first century. They describe the entire purpose and distinctive temper of his life, and indicate the exhaustless sources of his boldness and fortitude, energy and valour. They are true of him as a lad and a man, as a preacher and writer, as a worker and builder. He was intrinsically

a crusader of massive strength and sterling character, imperturbable fearlessness and irresistible dash. Like Browning, he was ever a 'fighter.' The sword of the Lord was in his hands from his youth, and he attained to marvellous skill in the use of it."

It was freely stated at the time of the Down Grade trouble that Spurgeon had Clifford principally in view when he fulminated against those whom he alleged had departed from Evangelical beliefs. This, however, was distinctly erroneous. Whilst Mr. Spurgeon was ill at Mentone, the *Sword and Trowel* received for review a copy of Dr. Clifford's "Dawn of Manhood." After a time a proof of the notice was sent to the publisher with an explanation that up to the present it had been crowded out, but would appear in the next issue. The critique proved of such an extraordinary character and charged the Doctor with so large an amount of double-dyed heterodoxy that he wrote immediately to Mr. Spurgeon upon the matter. The latter replied that he had not seen the review, and regretted to find that Dr. Clifford was credited with views which he (Mr. Spurgeon) did not believe him to hold. He differed from Dr. Clifford in some things, but at the same time the difference was not of the character set forth in the notice. He further said that he deeply regretted this had been written, and expressed the highest appreciation of Dr. Clifford as a Christian brother.

With Dr. James Spurgeon Dr. Clifford was in greater agreement concerning the Down Grade con-

troversy, and it will be remembered that through the former's action, conjointly with that of the Rev. Charles Williams, the Baptist Union preserved its peace and unity. In 1896, Dr. James Spurgeon retired from the presidency of the Pastors' College for the following reasons: "I feel," he said, "we ought to cultivate brotherly relations with the denomination; my policy therefore is one of 'union,' and there are some who want a policy of 'isolation.' On this account I retire from the leadership, as I have not 'elbow room' enough to satisfy my conscience. I deem it essential that whoever occupies the position of president should have the confidence of the Church and the pastor of the Tabernacle, and as from the report of the last Church meeting I feel that my leadership does not give satisfaction, I must stand aside that one who can may take my place."

A practical evidence of Dr. James Spurgeon's regard for the Baptist Union is the Home of Rest at Brighton which his widow presented to its Council.

The peerless Baptist preacher, Dr. Alex. McLaren, is still with us, though now in partial retirement. In denominational work he and Dr. Clifford have often associated. During the former's recluse days at Manchester before the Australian tour the latter tried, on behalf of the Union, to obtain his services at one of the Spring Assemblies. Dr. McLaren's replies are quite characteristic of that time. He wrote: "As to my preaching, it is out of the question. Not even your

sweet persuading tongue would manage that. I am going to Australia, and shall be fastened by the nose to the grindstone till I sail, for I have so much work which I must complete in advance in order to keep faith. I could neither give the time to prepare for the sermon, nor the time to go to London to preach, and shall not be at the April meetings. I have made up my mind to do no more full-dress affairs, and it really is of no use to try to alter my decision. What Australia may do to stir me up I know not, but I have no heart or spirit nor any capacity now for the public work of the denomination, so please you and Booth leave me to keep in my corner and do what I can do. I am very sorry to seem disobliging; I am not really so, but the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and my firework-flinging days are over."

Then on another occasion when Dr. Clifford tried to secure his services for a brother minister Dr. McLaren replied, "My day for such work is past. I am too old, too weary, too sad for it. I shrink from it with an unconquerable dislike. I can still grind away in my own corner and do work at my desk, but that is all that I am fit for. I have so much to do for America and for the Expositor's Bible that I can only get through it by absolutely shutting out all other work. I am like Bottom's friend, 'slow of study,' and though, like his, the part which you suggest is 'nothing but roaring,' I am afraid that I cannot 'do it extempore,' so do not be either angry

or more astonished than you can help at the confession of an incapacity which may you long live before you experience ! ”

However, through the winsome persuasion of the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., Dr. McLaren did eventually leave his beloved study to assist in the organisation of the Baptist Twentieth Century Fund. Its missionary aspect appealed to him. He saw that with this financial support the Baptist Church could undertake pioneer work amongst the masses outside the Churches. For his powerful advocacy and enormous influence during the progress of the Fund no man holds a warmer admiration than his friend, Dr. Clifford.

Professor W. Gray Elmslie, M.A., D.D., passed away fifteen years ago, and fifteen years too early, as it seems to his friends to-day. But in reverence they bow to the Divine will. The Professor and his wife were associated with Westbourne Park, where they had sittings. Between the Doctor and the Professor there existed a warm attachment. When the end came the former said in the memorial sermon preached on the occasion, “ To us the removal of Dr. Elmslie is a special affliction. He dwelt by our side. He so often shared our work that we felt as though he belonged to us. He came readily and served us nobly. His earnest voice was frequently heard within these walls, and his quickening words will live and throb in our memories for many days. We loved him, looked for his appearance with eagerness,

and rejoiced in his luminous and inspiring teachings. His death is to us a personal loss."

During Dr. Clifford's vacations Professor Elmslie proved the most attractive preacher the Church could obtain.

Few Free Church leaders have left a more abiding mark upon their generation than Dr. W. F. Moulton, of the Leys School, Cambridge. His association with Dr. Clifford commenced in 1895, when Dr. Moulton wrote to him as follows: "It is very pleasant to me to be brought into correspondence with you. I have had few opportunities of meeting you, but like most other Nonconformists I seem in constant contact with you by means of your public works and acts."

Dr. Moulton then described the formation of a small committee of leading Nonconformists to consider steps with a view to united temperance action. "It is proposed," he adds, "that the signatories be the Bishop of Durham, the Bishop of Chester, Dr. Mackennal, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Dr. G. A. Smith, Cardinal Vaughan, Dr. Martineau, yourself and myself. Most of these have given consent. May I hope that you will consent to sign?"

Dr. Clifford signed the memorial as requested by Dr. Moulton, and in reply to certain reflections which the former made concerning united efforts the latter confessed, "I do not wonder at what you say of Grindelwald. As I have read my friend Hughes'

words I have felt inclined to rub my eyes and shake myself to get out of a manifest dream. . . . I have always welcomed the thought of these Grindelwald meetings though I have not attended any, but I have never expected any good result from them except one—the great good that would be done by bringing men together and enabling them as individuals to know one another.”

Passing to the Anglican Church, Dr. Clifford has been brought into contact with many of its distinguished sons. For the broad-minded Dean Stanley he had a warm regard. They had met at Dean (then Canon) Fremantle’s house for the purpose of organising “the Christian Conference,” “to promote mutual knowledge and sympathy between men of various denominations.” At this meeting Dr. Clifford had a pleasant conversation with the Dean, who was interested in the progress of the Baptists in America—a fact which had impressed him during a visit to the States. He was astonished at their growth, and sought information concerning the development of the Churches there, and also respecting the difference between the General and Particular Baptists. His wide catholicity enabled him to enter with much interest into the explanations and information which the Doctor supplied. With Dean Fremantle, as the sequence shows, he has been in correspondence and association for more than twenty years.

A most interesting episode in connection with his relations to Anglicans occurred in 1885. At the time

a mission was organised by the Anglican Church for West London. Dean Fremantle and the late Rev. Brooke Lambert, vicar of Greenwich, proposed an incursion of ten clergymen into ten Nonconformist pulpits and *vice versa*—"if," as Mr. Brooke Lambert said, "we could find ten righteous men on either side." The project failed, as all such united efforts are bound to fail as long as the Church of England is established by law and spiritually disfranchises the rest of the Christian societies of the land. Dr. Clifford, aware of the intention, invited the Vicar of Greenwich to preach at Westbourne Park. The story now may best be told from the letters written by Mr. Lambert to Dr. Clifford :—

"THE VICARAGE, GREENWICH, S.E.

"January 14, 1885.

"I gladly accept your kind invitation, with this proviso, that if I am inhibited by any one, I am not sure whether I shall persevere and dare the law.

"Now I am a little sensitive as to law-breaking. When done as and seen to be a solemn act I believe that it is a most righteous thing, and any one who engages in it must bear the penalty without grumbling.

"So if I were one of ten I should be prepared to carry the matter to extremes, but if I stand alone, I question whether the action would not seem an eccentricity on the part of an individual, out of

which no good result would come to impress the public mind. It would, I am afraid, only seem another instance of the prevailing *ἀνομία*.

"But I need hardly say how cordially I respond to the kind wish you express as an evidence of the desire to break down the middle wall of partition. I will therefore preach for you morning or evening, as you wish, but you must not expect an oration.

"I should like to know whether you habitually preach from notes or from book. I do both, and should like to follow the order of your Church, though one of the alternatives is much less pleasant than the other."

"February 3, 1885.

"*Jacta est alea*. Here is the letter of the official of the Diocese, Canon Gregory,¹ and my reply.² I propose to come to you on Sunday evening, and perhaps you will tell me the hour of service. I had some little doubt as to whether I had better take the course during the vacancy of the see, because nasty things will be said, but I shall rely on you or some one else offering me an opportunity of making good my promise to try again. I do not, however,

¹ Now Dean of St. Paul's.

² It should be explained that Mr. Brooke Lambert was in the Rochester diocese, and that Dr. Temple had just been appointed to the London diocese, but had not entered upon his duties. Mr. Brooke Lambert, in a letter of January 31st, stated that he would not "throw difficulties in the way of a man like Dr. Temple at his first incoming." He also added that he was sensitive against opposing the law.

want to do this in a hurry, but should prefer to wait for such an opportunity as your generous reception of the mission has given me now."

"February 5, 1885.

"I hear the Bishop has written to you. I have told him I am not sure that I can resign my intention. Have asked to see him on Saturday, and will telegraph on that evening."

"February 5, 1885.

"All you tell me makes me feel that if ever there was an occasion to do what I purpose this is the one. I am abundantly thankful for Mr. Harvey Brooks' ¹ kindness in mentioning the matter, and to you for your attitude in the matter. One thing only could prevent me, and that would be an inhibition from my own Bishop. I doubt whether he has the power to do it, and I doubt whether he would do it. If he did it I might comply, but I shall wait and see. I am going to take an ecclesiastical lawyer's opinion on the matter this afternoon.

"I am, of course, subjected to some pressure to adopt a course other than I purpose, but I so thoroughly agree with what you say that I do not think they have altered my convictions one whit, and they have not altered my purpose.

"My relations to my Bishop are not mere ordinary ones; he has been more than kind—has, I fancy,

¹ The Vicar of St. Stephen's, Paddington.

abstained from writing purposely, though I have told him what I am going to do.

"I will come to you on Sunday before service, as you kindly propose."

"7.30 p.m.

"February 6, 1885.

"I hope a letter posted to you in the early hours of this day reached you before yours was in my hands. I left this house at 1.30 and returned only at 7. I have seen an eminent ecclesiastical lawyer, and learn that the only inhibition is a 'monition under seal,' which I have not received, and am not likely to get. The letter is, so far as legal proceedings are concerned, wastepaper. Were the Bishop hostile to me I should treat it as such. As he is most kindly disposed, and only wrote this by his secretary to give me an easy way of escape, I feel bound to try and see him to-morrow. Before that interview has taken place I can say nothing absolutely, but I can conceive no argument which can prevent me from carrying out my intention. I could only wish the deliverance which I hope to make were more worthy of the trouble it has caused you and the courtesy you have shown. But I have been ill this week. You spoke of a scheme of service, which was not enclosed. I should like to know *the time*."

The letters are eloquent. It was heroic of Mr. Brooke Lambert under the circumstances to adopt the course he did. Moreover, it exhibited his fine

Christian charity. Yet is it not a bitter reflection upon the progress of Christian thought that nearly twenty years have elapsed, and to-day a great historic Church still remains in bondage to absolutely narrow sectarianism?

A private letter written by Dr. Clifford to a friend at the time gives his view of the incident.

"Brooke Lambert's visit was enjoyed. To me it was a poor and painful phenomenon that such an act should be counted a meritorious one in any sense. I could not make even a whisper of exultation escape my lips. It was after all only acting on the lower planes of Christian life and privilege, and is far more suggestive of the heights we have to reach in order to get a full view of the spirit of Christ than of any victories won. Yet there is this solace. We know that the spirit of Christian oneness, of real sympathy with the best work for the welfare of the world, is far more abundantly pervasive of the Churches than the rigid lines of division would suggest. I have been brought into contact with men like Dean Stanley, Canon Fremantle, Dean Bradley, S. A. Barnett, Dr. Sadler, Brooke Lambert, and others, and have rejoiced to recognise the uniting power of the Christian ideal and the quickening influence of common sympathies. Indeed, I've no doubt among reflective men the divisions of Christendom are more in form than in substance, in the letter than in the spirit, and spring more from scant knowledge of each other and the strong tyranny of the past—a past of living conviction

and of great fruitfulness, than from actual alienation of feeling, or the positive necessities of our own day. Therefore I am glad of any sign of fraternisation amongst Christians, and especially amongst those widely separated by tradition and by practices (born of conviction and sustained in fidelity to truth), since I believe it to be a more accurate representation of *fact* than the obvious lines and marks of separation and division are."

Turning to another branch of human life, we note his association with Mr. W. T. Stead, the versatile journalist and editor. In all the humanitarian projects of "that good man, Stead," as Carlyle called him, Dr. Clifford has proved ever willing to bear a valiant part. But when Mr. Stead dreams of the utilisation of the Papacy as an instrument of social progress the former is content to allow the latter to "gang his own gait." In a previous chapter allusion has been made to the Purity Crusade and the Peace Propaganda which were pioneered with the pen by the journalist and supported in the pulpit and on the platform by the preacher.

"The occasion on which I was most gratified to see Dr. Clifford," says Mr. Stead, "occurred when I was dressed in a different costume. I well remember the first day in Coldbath Fields. Mr. Benjamin Waugh had just gone and Dr. Clifford came immediately after. We were not allowed to shake hands, but we were permitted to talk, and that was a great privilege with a person in gaol. At this time I was

able to realise the meaning of the words, 'I was in prison, and ye visited Me.'"

On the Christmas Eve when Mr. Stead was in prison he wrote most jubilantly to Dr. Clifford:—

"I have had a good time and a great time here. I wish you could see me if only for ten minutes. I am in much higher spirits than any of my visitors, and with good reason.

"Of course there are shadows. I am always ghost-haunted at Christmas time. This is my dear father's birthday. It is not quite two years since he passed away, and mother, she has gone, and they come to me at these times. But no gaol keeps them out: nor if I were out would these unsubstantial shadows assume substance sufficient for one embrace.

"So I am no worse off in than out. And I am alone with my work, and yet not alone, for God is with me and preparing me for some new task. What I know not, but soon shall know."

Mr. Stead has many times borne testimony to his hearty appreciation of Dr. Clifford's services to humanity and the Christian Churches generally.

In February, 1895, Dr. Clifford had some correspondence with a writer of altogether different calibre and purpose. Mr. Grant Allen had just published his novel, "The Woman who Did," which proposed the substitution of free contract for the rigidity of our marriage laws. He wrote as follows:—

"I am sending you a copy of my new book, 'The Woman who Did,' which contains my gospel—to

the Greeks, I fear, foolishness, and to the Jews a stumbling-block ; and you, I am afraid, are 'the Jews' in this matter. But it is the honest attempt of an earnest man to deliver his message to his generation ; and as such I earnestly hope you will read it. It comes straight from the heart, and offers what thirty years of reflection lead me to believe the only solution of a profound problem."

Mr. Grant Allen added a PS.—"Quench not the Spirit."

In his reply Dr. Clifford said: "You classify me with the Jews as to your gospel, and you advise that I should not 'quench the Spirit.' I welcome the advice, but question my right to the place you assign me in your category of readers. I believe in the liberty of prophesying, and belong to a people who have paid a high price for it—those terrible Anabaptists who still wait for their long-delayed vindication at the bar of history. In the problem you attack I feel a living interest, and for the art you exhibit in setting forth your solution I have a strong admiration. The problem is a real one. The difficulties in the way of a satisfactory solution are enormous. The method you advise will require men and women of heroic mould and, as you will agree, seriously prejudiced by the incalculable disadvantages of the children inevitably following this course of action. The present system is bad, but so far as I can see the change you propose is fraught with greater perils both to the persons who enter into these alliances and also their offspring."

Reference has already been made to Dr. Clifford's early admiration for Thomas Cooper, the Chartist leader. Before the latter's death he experienced the pleasure of welcoming him to Westbourne Park. "After many wanderings he had come back to the Saviour of his earlier life and accepted Him as his leader." Dr. Clifford tells how he visited him at Lincoln when the old agitator had commenced his homeward journey. At the close of an interesting talk on literary and political subjects the latter said, "Now you must pray." "I knelt down and prayed," says Dr. Clifford. "He followed every sentence with the heartiest zest, often interjecting, 'Yes!' 'Amen!' 'Bless the Lord!' with all the glow and fervour of the Methodist prayer-meeting. Then, sitting in his chair, he poured out his heart in supplication for himself, his pastor, the Church at Cooper Chapel, the nation, and the world. That old saint's prayer shines out of the past like the face of an angel of God."

CHAPTER XXI

PERSONAL INCIDENTS

“**D**R. CLIFFORD at home” might be an alternative heading for this chapter. An endeavour is here made to illustrate the simple, joyous, strenuous life he leads. No fact appeals more directly to the man in the street than the unpretentious manner in which he lives. His house is but a short distance from his church—it possesses neither lawn, paddock, nor conservatory—and is just a worker’s home accessible to brother ministers, journalists, members of his Church or working men. One and all are welcome.

No philosopher has preached more faithfully the duty of simple living, and as a Christian man more joyfully approached his ideal. The motto, “Simple living and high thinking,” has found in him a worthy exponent. He sees to-day the Christian Church fronted with organised materialism, which has even invaded the sanctity of Church life. The rapid increase of wealth during the past quarter of a century has ensnared many Church members with

the love of luxury and ease. The standard of living is higher. Proportionately the extent of giving is lower. The balance of the increase in income provides social entertainments, motors, dress, and amusements, and seldom a larger donation to the Missionary Society. The love of display eats like a canker into our deeper and more spiritual experiences and robs us of the religious sense which craves for God. Whittier's beautiful hymn might with advantage be the prayer of the Churches at the present time :—

“ Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
 Forgive our feverish ways,
 Reclothe us in our rightful minds ;
 In purer lives Thy service find,
 In deeper reverence, praise.”

His library at the top of the house is simply a preacher's workshop—so full of books, pamphlets, and papers that two or three persons would find it difficult to move with ease across the apartment. Like himself, there is nothing for show, no *editions de luxe*, or the evidence of literary hobbies or extravagances. The volumes have been collected for absolute use.

At one side of the small room is the couch given him by his “ boys,” and at another the type-writer, which has been pressed into his daughter's service to enable her to overtake the heavy correspondence which, since the commencement of the Education controversy, has poured in upon him. Miss Kate

Clifford acts as his secretary, and with her able assistance he manages somehow to keep pace with the demands of his friends.

As a rule he rides in 'busses in preference to cabs, usually amidst the purer air outside, where he seats himself near the driver. On the Bayswater route he is well known, and the Jehus quite appreciate a chat with "the Doctor," as they call him. When passing him in the street they exchange greetings with a jerk of the whip or a friendly nod. On railway journeys he travels third class. Mr. Law tells me a characteristic incident which happened during one of his presidential visits. They were returning to town together from the North, with the intention of joining Mr. Price Hughes at Durham. The latter invariably travelled first class, and no one will blame him, for, like the Doctor, he did much work in the train. When they met, Mr. Law, knowing their preferences, remarked, "Well, what am I going to do with you both?" Mr. Hughes laughingly said that nothing would induce him to travel third class, whilst good-humouredly the Doctor declared he would not journey "first." Neither gave way, and both kept to their special compartments. As a compromise, Mr. Law journeyed part of the way with one and a part with the other.

It is commonly held that he has only worn a "white choker" on one occasion—and this of a special character. The occurrence caused so much surprise amongst his friends that he never repeated the experi-

ment. An interesting fiction used to be told at one time, and, because so characteristic, believed. When he was presented to the King, so ran the story, some members of the party discovered to their dismay that the Doctor's tie was *infra dig.*, and perforce the driver was directed to an outfitter's to permit of an exchange. But when he hears the tale he laughs good-humouredly and says, "No! it isn't true. It is a myth." In his colonial tour, however, the Australian press, with a freedom inseparable from the freer life in the southern hemisphere, commented upon his rough serge suit and happy-go-lucky tie.

But he does not save by economy in dress or railway travelling. One of his deacons—now, alas! departed—used to say that he could not be trusted with money. A piteous tale, some heroic enterprise—say of the Free Methodists on the Cornish coast, or a Bosworth Road extension, stirs his generosity and extracts his cash. Indeed, his friends at Westbourne Park have some difficulty in preventing him from placing too many burdens on his back at one time.

Like Charles Haddon Spurgeon, he disregards the prefix "Rev.," and never himself uses it. "Nothing is secular to the Christian man," he says,—“every calling ought to be a religious calling; and if a man cannot look upon his vocation as religious, it is time for him to have done with it and to take up something else.” Never for one moment will he recognise any difference between the man and the minister. Canon Hensley-Henson sought to establish such a

position when he said, "I appeal from Dr. Clifford, the political orator and party leader, to Dr. Clifford the Christian minister, from the noisy invectives of the public meeting to the calmer reflections of his study and the oratory, from the applause of an excited audience, drunken with party passion, to the tribunal of the pastor's conscience." But Dr. Clifford replied, "I confess I do not know what this means. My politics are a part of my religion, and my speeches on political questions are, as far as I can make them, the application of what I regard as the Christianity of Jesus to life."

II.

"What a blessed home-life I've had too! How much I owe to my sunny, undespairing, ever-planning, ever-achieving wife no tongue can tell." So wrote Dr. Clifford in 1884. Twenty years later he feels his indebtedness twenty times more acutely. One Sunday evening he was advising his young men at Westbourne Park to select as their wives those who were workers at home, and could cook, and who were learned in household ways. "Yes," he remarked, "I would make that test if I were starting again." His audience laughed heartily at the suggestion. "Ah," he said, "I did not intend to say that. I used that test before, and have been rewarded by the longevity which I have enjoyed and by the vigour which I possess. I did not intend to say this, but now I must go on. I owe whatever of

mental and physical vigour I maintain to the fact that I chose for my wife a 'worker at home,' one who has not only been the happiness and joy of her husband, but also the helper and strength of her husband."

Mrs. Price Hughes tells a delightful story concerning the occasion when she first met her husband. Mrs. Clifford could, I believe, similarly unfold a tale of romance in those early Praed Street days, when, on a visit to her aunt, who was associated with the chapel, she became acquainted with the young minister. He was intent on winning the little cause back to better days and greater usefulness, and at the same time won a perfect wife. I have heard that Miss Carter was not an immersed Baptist, but love knows no bars, bounds, or rules. It simply triumphed over another "little minister," and with jubilation he announced his engagement on February 24, 1860, whilst two years later the marriage took place at Southampton.

Mrs. Clifford was the daughter of a medical practitioner living at Newbury, and two of her brothers, one at Bath and the other at Liverpool, are distinguished members of the same profession. Three of her own children are now also associated with it—one son as doctor in Manchester, another as dentist, and a daughter—Miss Edith Clifford—as nurse. A third son is an electrical engineer at Nottingham.

Joy and sorrow have intermingled sun and shadow

in their home life. Two or three of their children passed away in early years, amidst the keen regrets of both husband and wife. On one such occasion he wrote: "I preached last Sunday twice—though it was a painful task and required some courage. I took the R.V. text in Job (in the morning): 'Are the consolations of God too small for thee?' and felt solid help in the adequacy of the consolations of God for souls in such a crisis. At night I tried to talk on 'the secret of an unbroken peace,' from the words of Elihu: 'When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?'"

The sunshine intervenes, and on March 22, 1887, he says: "We have just had our second honeymoon. Twenty-five years ago we went to the Isle of Wight. We have just been again, to the same places along the same routes. It has been a pleasant and most refreshing time, rich in stimulus to memory, gratitude, faith, hope, and service."

To-day they are a veritable Darby and Joan! A short hour or so before a large meeting in the City Temple, when he was the hero of the occasion, a friend saw him coming along the Embankment, with the jubilancy of youth, arm in arm with his wife. A perfect pair of lovers! oblivious of meeting and all things mundane! He verging on seventy, yet with springy step, even though he has the student's back. His wife radiant in the affection of her husband and joyful in the honour that now belongs to him. Thus they tripped along by the side of Father Thames!

On one occasion, as Mrs. Clifford was delightedly witnessing the ovation given him by a great audience, some one whispered to her, "Aren't you proud of him?" With emphasis and charming naïvete she replied, "*Of course* I am." It is a great pleasure to many friends that Mrs. Clifford now accompanies her husband to several of his large public meetings in various parts of the country. They believe that she is able to supply some of the caution which the Doctor neglects in attending to his own personal health and comfort after a big speech at a crowded assembly.

Early in his ministerial career he suffered from indifferent health, and had many—and some serious—illnesses. Incessant overwork, irregular meal-times when travelling from place to place, and numerous meetings in badly-ventilated buildings assisted to produce these breakdowns. That he survived them is a marvel to his friends who knew him at this period. They unanimously accord the victory to the careful and devoted nursing of his gracious wife.

The Free Churches of England owe her indeed a deep debt of gratitude. Without her self-sacrifice and devotion he could never have attempted his manifold labours, or persistently adopted the life of a vagrant, which has been his for many years.

III.

A sample of his working days which he once gave at the suggestion of an interviewer is worth quoting

here, because of the sidelights thrown upon the manner and method of his life.

"On Tuesday," he said, "I rose at 7.30, as is my custom of recent years, and had a bath. During breakfast I glanced at my correspondence, always a heavy item, and looked at the newspaper.

"Breakfast over, I retired to my study, and after a morning's work left for Birmingham. At Birmingham I addressed a crowded meeting on the Education question in the Town Hall, and afterwards attended a supper of the Liberal Federation, where I spoke on the prospects of the Liberal Party. At ten the next morning I returned to town, reaching home in time for lunch. After lunch I had a nap, corrected some proofs, went through my letters, had a cup of tea, and at four o'clock left for Brighton, where I addressed another meeting at 7.30 o'clock.

"I spent the night with my friend, Mr. Campbell, and left after breakfast for London. As soon as I got back I went to the City Temple in order to be present at my friend Dr. Parker's first service after his breakdown. This was over at one o'clock. I had some lunch, and hurried off to a wedding at two. At three o'clock I had an Educational committee meeting, at which I took the chair, and then an engagement with Mr. W. T. Stead. This over, I returned home and spent the evening (there not being the customary service at my church) in catching up my correspondence.

"Ordinarily I am in my study at 8.30, and work

there till twelve, when I go for a walk. After lunch I have a nap, and, provided I have not a meeting away from London in the evening, I visit the sick members of my Church in the afternoon. It is, however, a rare event for me to have an evening free.

"On Sundays I am in my study soon after eight, and remain there till 10.45, when I go to my service. After lunch I have a sleep, and then visit one or other of the five schools in connection with Westbourne Park Chapel. Tea over, I go back to my study, and at 6.45 go once more to my rostrum. At the close of the evening service I remain in my vestry as long as is necessary, in order to see any who wish to talk to me on matters pertaining to the spiritual life. One Sunday a month I go down at nine to the Lecture Hall, where our Sunday evening 'socials' are held, and submit to be catechised by anybody who cares to do so. At ten minutes to ten o'clock I conduct family prayers, and this brings the social gathering and my Sunday's work to an end.

"The key to my day is the utilisation of the odd moments; I attach as much importance to the right use of these as to the work of the definitely filled hours. I try never to lose a minute, but seize this one to jot down a thought, that to dip into a book, another to get a bit of rest. Then, again, I always endeavour, but do not often succeed, to be ahead of my work.

"For example, I know on Sunday evening the

subjects of my sermons for the following Sunday, and thus during the week there is going on an almost unconscious simmering of thought with reference to these. Moreover, I do each bit of work as if I had nothing else in the world to do but that specific bit. I seek to shut out everything else, and concentrate, concentrate.

“As you know, I am now in the forty-fifth year of my pastorate and work in London. All my life I have been a total abstainer and a non-smoker. My favourite method of exercise is walking, and when studying for my degrees I used to average thirty-six miles a week. I am a great believer in sleep, in short naps during the day. As long as I can get sleep I can't have too much work. As often as I am able I lie down on the couch, if only for five minutes. Railway travelling, of which I have a great amount, does not tire me, provided I can recline, but it does if I am obliged to sit up. Each day's duties I let be sufficient for the day. If, instead of being satisfied with doing a day's work at a time, I look ahead, my engagement-book would appal me and unfit me for the claims of the present.”

IV.

From his College days, as previously instanced, there has always been manifest the intense desire to work for high ideals. One of his old friends has shown me copies of the ballads which were Dr. Clifford's favourites in his pre-ministerial days. On



Photo. G. & R. Lavis, Eastbourne.

MRS. CLIFFORD.

the principle that individuals, like nations, may be estimated by their songs, two or three extracts are here quoted.

There is the familiar "Dare to be right," by G. L. Taylor, in its former setting :—

"Dare to be right ! dare to be true !
You have a work that no other can do ;
Do it so bravely, so kindly, so well,
As to gladden all heaven, and silence all hell.

.
Dare to be right ! dare to be true !
Prayerfully, lovingly, firmly, pursue
The pathway by saints and by seraphim trod,
The pathway that climbs to the city of God."

Then there was the variant, "Dare to be singular,"
by Edward Fry :—

"Dare to be singular ! let the opinion
Which governs the multitude be what it may ;
Speak out for truth, and assert the dominion
Of free thought, whoever may stand in the way.

.
Dare to be singular ! great truths demand it ;
Rush to the front like a brave pioneer ;
The stronger the error—the bolder withstand it ;
With the van at his choice, who would shrink to the
rear ?

What if the struggle be fierce and protracted,
The tyrants of wrong may your prowess deride ;
But men of the right stamp the more are attracted
The fewer the band which has truth on its side."

Here is another of a different order :—

“If men cared less for wealth and fame,
And less for battle-fields and glory ;
If writ in human hearts, a name,
Seemed better than in song and story ;
If men, instead of nursing pride,
Would learn to hate it and abhor it ;
 If more relied
 On love than pride,
The world would be the better for it.”

He copied out Dr. Norman Macleod's “Trust in God and do the right” as an inspiration for those early years, and I transcribe the last stanza from the faded copy made fifty years ago :—

“Simple rule and safest guiding,
 Inward peace and inward light,
Star upon our path abiding,
 Trust in God and do the right.”

Then, last, there is the ballad of former days, so popular in many circles, and which is infinitely superior to the music-hall drivel of the present time :—

“Nothing great is lightly won,
 Nothing great is lost,
Every good deed nobly done
 Will repay the cost.
Leave to Heaven in humble trust
 All you wish to do,
But if you will succeed you must
 Paddle your own canoe !”

These quotations are not given for their poetical

excellence. Rather for their sentiments and their suggestive bearing upon his principles and teaching.

V.

His holidays have generally been designed for the acquisition of knowledge. For instance, at one period he spent several vacations in Germany, where he studied German theology and educational methods. We have seen how he worked during his holiday trip to the Colonies. Then when visiting America in 1898 we find him writing to a friend: "I hope to see a little into American life, and to advance my knowledge of social and other questions. America is full of interest to me, and the neighbourhood of Boston is laden with magnetism. Emerson, the guide and inspirer of my boyhood, Holmes, Thoreau, Longfellow, &c., &c.!—how these names suggest themes of surpassing interest!" But even this literary quest was in addition to an exchange of pulpits with Dr. Lorimer, of Tremont Temple Baptist Church. Incidentally it should be added that he received a resolution from the Boston Church thanking "him most heartily for his clear and rich exposition of the Holy Scriptures, for his exaltation of Jesus Christ as the God-man, the world's Saviour, and for his affectionate appeals to men personally to receive the unbounded grace and love of God."

His holiday Sundays—a recognised regulation in ministerial life—have often been spent in finding out how Londoners spend their Sunday. Seated on

the Embankment near Westminster Bridge he once heard an old man say to his fellow-pilgrim, "I wonder whether we shall have to work as hard for a living in the next world as in this, because if we have I don't want to go." On another occasion he chanced to get in chat with a young fellow in Hyde Park. The Doctor asked him why he did not attend church. "Well," replied the other, "to tell you the truth, I don't care to go. I've been to church and chapel till I'm tired. I am sick of it. The parsons are not real men. They're always talking about the Church—the Church—as though it were everything one had to care for, or else singing hymns about heaven and the angels, as though life were always Sunday, and Monday, with its work and worries, never came. Besides, they don't deal straight with you. They talk in one way in the pulpit and another out of it. They say salvation is simple and easy, and most of us know it is hard enough, and they tell us the Bible has no errors in it, when you can see them as plain as the nose on your face."

That young man subsequently became an enthusiastic worker in a Christian Church in the country.

Since the Education controversy he has not been out of England for his summer holiday.

VI.

We are outliving the libel upon the Puritans. The modern example is not a "Kill-joy" or "Turn-

the-cream sour." Concerning Dr. Clifford, the lines of an Arabian poet seem especially appropriate :—

"Sunshine was he
In the winter day ;
And in the midsummer
Coolness and shade."

On occasions when he meets his young men in their social hour or at his Church meetings he simply bubbles over with fun, and enjoys a good story or hearty laugh as much as any. No one gets dull in his society, and a holiday ramble with him is a bit of rare enjoyment, as any of his young people who have taken part in such excursions know full well.

On the public platform his asides are happily humorous. He is quick to seize a point, and deft in turning interjections to profitable account. On one occasion he stated that he "had speeches of Mr. Chamberlain" [relating to education]. (Loud laughter.) This was just prior to the latter's South African visit. Cries were raised, "He's going away!" With readiness the Doctor replied, "Yes ; and he was not surprised that he was going out of the country. He would do the same if he were Mr. Chamberlain, for the House of Commons was not, in view of his former speeches, just now a very pleasant place for him." (Loud laughter and applause.) At times it is a skilful defence of his brother ministers. Speaking to the Baptist Assembly, he remarked at one

gathering, "Some of you are making great fortunes." There was much laughter, for the statement as it stood without qualification told equally against ministers and laymen alike. Instantly appreciating the situation, he smilingly added, "Of course I do not mean the ministers." There was a breeziness about the frank explanation which started laughter again. On another occasion he tried a variant upon one of Ian Maclaren's stories, and told it in this way: "Three men—an Irishman, an Englishman, and a Scot—journeyed up to London. The Irishman, in his eagerness to get out of the train, left his luggage behind. The plain, slow Saxon gathered up his luggage and marched stolidly off. The Scot was the last to leave, and gathered up all that was left. The Irishman stood for the Methodists, the Englishman for the Congregationalists, and the Scot for the Baptists, Quakers, and the rest." His Baptist audience abundantly appreciated the point.

The length of his papers and addresses before public assemblies has caused at times many amusing incidents. He never believes in sparing either himself or his audience. It is always good measure and running over. Sometimes his address has come just prior to the luncheon hour, and he has made valiant attempts not to exceed the time limit by rapid reading. Appreciating the situation, the audience, with good-natured mirth, has cheered each additional point. At other times he has suggested omitting passages or closing, but with loud cries of "Go

on!" his hearers have expressed their wish for the whole. With ready wit, he has asked, "What is the use of going on? You can get it all for a penny." At this sally there has been more merriment and fresh cries of "Go on!" I have heard him many times under similar circumstances, but have never known either speaker or hearers to lose touch with one another.

A significant incident occurred after one of his "bumper" papers during the Autumn Assembly of the Baptist Union at Edinburgh in 1901. He had kept the attention of the crowded audience to the last. When he finished the clock pointed to a few minutes past the luncheon hour. Before the applause had subsided a perfect stampede ensued. Dr. McLaren was in the chair, and highly indignant at the occurrence, he rose—lightning flashing from his eye—and with penetrating voice made the caustic comment, "As Edward Irving was once speaking to a dissolving audience he stopped and said, 'We will wait until the chaff has blown away!'"

VII.

Reference to his speeches suggests the methods he adopts in their preparation. These he describes as follows:—

(1) To master my facts and my line of reasoning as far as possible.

(2) Write what I wish to say as fully as time permits.

(3) Re-write or, as the Germans say, re-work the subject.

(4) "Boil down" so as to get the briefest analysis of what is to be said.

(5) Resist the temptation to rely upon the written phrase, and leave the mind to act with all possible freedom and spontaneity.

(6) Make clear to myself the precise character of the result I wish to achieve, and then bend all my energies in that direction.

Then he adds further information as to the way in which he has gained his own platform powers:—

(1) Never forget distinctness of articulation. This is a primary consideration in effective utterance.

(2) To get a vocabulary read the best literature and mark all *elect* terms—terms that give distinction to a sentence and lift it out of the rut of a wearisome commonness.

(3) To secure self-command become self-oblivious by charging the entire mind—the emotional not less than the reflective part—with the subject and with the purpose of the speech.

(4) Incessant and undespairing work is all in all.

It is clear that, alike for preaching and speaking, he studies carefully, even laboriously, and never trusts to haphazard and scanty preparation for a great speech.

CHAPTER XXII

APPRECIATION

CARLYLE says: "Nobler than all in this kind are the lives of heroic, God-inspired men." In the present chapter we refer to the heroic side of Dr. Clifford's character. He has stood before Free Churchmen and the nation generally as the doughty champion of Puritan principles, and amidst the clash of arms and the dusty strife of the arena the world has seen the soldier rather than the saint. His friends appreciate both traits. They know also that he loathes the din of warfare, and paradoxical though it seem, that all his strokes are on behalf of an ultimate and abiding peace. No other guerdon could have kept him at his post.

Some opponents have recognised his mailed fist or brandished steel when dealing heavy blows, and have failed to see the prophet's garb beneath the coat of mail. It reminds one of a clergyman who said to a ministerial friend of the Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell, "You are visiting your flock, are you?" "No," he replied, "I have been calling upon our new Baptist

minister." "Oh," said the clergyman, "I haven't seen him yet. Is he a religious man, or is he one of Dr. Clifford's sort?"

"Dr. Clifford's sort," forsooth! What lamentable ignorance of his character and life-work! Were we not assured of its veracity the incident almost seems incredible. "Dr. Clifford's sort!" Why, if there were only a thousand like him we might cherish hopes of a quickened pace in religious work during the present century.

"Dr. Clifford's sort!" Let me show in two or three paragraphs the source of his strength—the dynamo of his spiritual being—affording some indication whether he is "a religious man." The extracts are taken, by permission of the recipient of the letters, from correspondence with one of his oldest friends during a period dating from 1877 to 1896.

Comparative Uselessness and Imperfection.

"I am pursued morning, noon, and night with a sense of inadequacy, imperfection, unfitness, and though I do not show it . . . yet this conviction of comparative uselessness and imperfection haunts me till it gives me fits of despair. Did I not know that He was more merciful to me than I feel I dare be to myself, I should have surrendered long before this. But His marvellous grace in accepting what a man *intends and purposes and agonises to be and do* is an unalterable solace to me. I adore Him for it."

Gratitude for Life and Opportunity.

Here is another, written seven years later, breathing a spirit of radiant thankfulness for the opportunities of service which had until then come to him.

"Forty-eight to-day ! I am ineffably grateful for so long, so joyous, and so serene a life. Were I called away now—though a long way off the supposed age of the ancient Simeon, I should die with a song on my lips for so blessed an existence. I've done but little compared with what I ought, but I've enjoyed much, and not least, but most, the fight for pure aims, unselfish motives, and real helpfulness to my fellows. When I think of my start and of the successive stages of my experience, I can honestly say I am moved to adoration of God my Father beyond all expression for the leadership He has granted me in His Son, who has been the *ideal* of my life, and its inspiration. 'What would Christ do?' here, and here, and here, I have found the solution of problems untold ; and His spirit of self-sacrifice, of victorious daring for the right and the true, of patient work and unconquerable hopefulness in the progress of humanity, has done more for me than all else. . . . But forty-eight to-day reminds me of the dwindling life-space ! I cannot think of repeating my grandmother's feat, and running the race to within half a pace of the hundred ! I must go hence soon ! and I am anxious to fill in my days with a little useful service. . . . I hope to follow my Leader closely."

Two further extracts may be given as typical of his purpose in the work he attempts :—

“The time is vital, never more so, though the workers pass from the scene. It is a great privilege to live and speak and do. I feel it more and more, but the problems are many, difficult, urgent, and some of them, with the intractable human nature we have to work in and with, insoluble. *Sursum corda* is still my motto. God’s in His heaven. All will be well with the world if we can hope and fight on.”

“The question of futurity rarely enters into my calculations. I am so engrossed in the ‘Everlasting now,’ and for everything that makes the present rich in moral energy, in elevated conception, in broadening sympathy, and in increasing availableness to our fellows of any powers we may have.”

This parallels a great teacher of the nineteenth century when he exclaimed, “Rest? Rest? Shall I not have all eternity to rest in?”

Mr. Gladstone remarked on one occasion, “Be inspired with the belief that life is a great and noble calling; not a mean and grovelling thing that we are to shuffle through as we can, but an elevated and lofty destiny.” This is Dr. Clifford’s inspiration. One thinks of him first as the zealous pastor who for forty-five years has laboured in the Metropolis, then of the theologian who cried, “Truth! though the heavens crush me for following her: no falsehood! though a whole celestial lubberland were the price of apostasy;” and thirdly of the leader in a

great fight for Puritanism and liberty. But there are other qualities. He has always been the unselfish advocate of great causes and the unswerving opponent of persecution, whether of the Turk abroad or class interests at home. In one sentence we see him as the stirring preacher and orator, with burning words urging his people back to Christ or rousing his countrymen to believe, as John Morley says, that "The strength of a State corresponds to the religious strength and soundness of the community of which the State is the civil organ." In another sentence we find the social reformer who pleads for temperance, decent homes, and the moral well-being of the people. Yet I have not exhausted the phases of his life-work. There is the prolific author, and last—but first—the tender, winsome friend whose personal services on behalf of younger men especially, are a loving memory to scores of his fellows.

This, then, is the quality of "Dr. Clifford's sort."

He started with scarcely any natural advantages. His family was poor, his early education scanty, he commenced to work in a factory at eleven to assist in his own maintenance. Here he laboured excessively long hours, and only possessed limited opportunities for mental improvement. What he has since accomplished are facts known to many readers of these pages, and are in themselves an eloquent eulogy of his industry, concentration and ability. "There is always life for a living one," says an old proverb, and Dr. Clifford supplies to-day an excellent illustration

of its application. To him difficulties seem only made to be surmounted.

Like all reformers, whether in the religious or political world, he has had to face misunderstanding, contumely and abuse. Fifteen years ago these were showered upon him by a coterie of somewhat narrow theologians who expected every man to express their shibboleths and closed the doors of their tabernacle against him if he failed to do so. The same class of men refused to have Dr. Horton at Huddersfield in 1888, when he had been invited to preach for the Baptist Union. It is refreshing to turn from those who seem to limit charity, hope and faith within their own small Bethel, to the letter Dr. Clifford wrote at the time he was passing through the fire of persecution :—

“I am not in the least disturbed by my critical friends,” he said. “I am used to it, expect it, know it *must* be, and am willing to carry all it involves. Not that it is pleasant to be called ‘a servant of Satan,’ etc., etc., but even such epithets and pourtrayals suggest a fellowship with the Highest Witness for Truth, and supply evidence that one must be near the right when bigotry and narrowness betray themselves by the use of such suspicious weapons. My chief wish is that men will not judge truth by the combatants, or ignore the claims of reason and revelation because of their sorry setting.”

During the progress of the Boer War he met in many quarters with almost uncontrollable ill-will.

Truly John Bull went "mafficking" with a vengeance! Some of his "Imperial" sons even planned injury to Dr. Clifford, as will be seen by the reference in an earlier chapter.

That criticism, abuse, or petty insults deflect him from his course for one-sixtieth of an inch is inconceivable. Even the fact that some of his best friends are opposed to his conception of the path of duty has never caused him to halt nor kept him dumb. First let him be assured that a course is right, he is never driven back, but "breast forward" pursues his way.

"And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

But after all he possesses an adequate consolation. No man surely is more beloved of his friends, and these he finds in all parts of the world. His magnetic personality contributes largely to this result, but even more so those qualities of heart and head which are so readily placed at the disposal of all who claim either his assistance or sympathy.

Another trait also appeals to them with conclusive force. His manifold work has never meant manifold opportunities of becoming wealthy. Unless the money is given him he will never leave personalty amounting even to two or three thousand pounds. In this respect he sets his brethren in the ministry a conspicuous example. He holds strong convictions on the "stipend" question. His Church would gladly

give him what he asked, but as a matter of fact he receives less than many other men who are not better known or harder worked. This unselfish spirit stirs the admiration of those who know him, even if they cannot agree with all his opinions.

"I hold it to be an 'accident' of a Christian society," he says, "that it should 'support' a pastor. The 'Church' does not exist for that end, but to *make character*, and to love mercy and do justly and walk humbly with God; to add to the sum of good-doing of *all* kinds in the world. I hold it to be the curse of Christendom that its 'Churches' are practically regarded as businesses for the maintenance of ministers. I have never held that view, nor permitted it to be taught without strong contradiction in speech and sometimes in deed. If a Church can consistently, whilst securing a maximum of character, keep a minister in 'clover,' I have not the slightest objection. Indeed, I think it ought. But I say the pastor or minister is bound by all the laws of the kingdom of Heaven to put the spiritual ends of Church existence first and his stipend last. Indeed he should care for it, *i.e.*, his salary, on the principle that good work ought to have good and fair pay, and that it hurts the *character* of people to obtain good work without paying a right price for it. . . . But enough on such a theme!"

This altruistic quality has greatly assisted in gaining for him so wide respect and even affection from the democracy—a large section of which is unfortu-

nately outside the Churches. Numbers of this class appreciate the fact that neither professionalism nor suspicion of priestly domination is found in his character. They recognise that he toils for great causes with pure aims, self-sacrifice, and much intellectual ability, that his religion guides his politics, and that these stand for the moral well-being of the people, even-handed justice, and national righteousness.

Incidentally one might add that the Free Churches to-day are realising that they must reach this vast community, organised in large and powerful unions, but mainly without the pale of definite religion. Dr. Clifford's methods for dealing with the difficulty are expressed by sympathy and toleration towards their aspirations of policy combined with a passionate desire to prove to them the reasonableness, sweetness, and ethical force of Christianity.

Those who only know him on the platform little suspect another side of his character. He fights like a soldier, but few men can be more deeply moved by his emotions. In the midst of a public speech these are completely kept in check. See him as pastor pleading in prayer for his people, and you appreciate the sympathetic trait which always predominates in the amalgam of a successful minister. More! you perceive the intense passion of the longing—even venting itself in tears—for the kingdom of Christ to come here and now in this twentieth century. One of his friends says, "Have I not seen

him shed tears over men returning to Christ? One of those tears in the life of the world is worth bundles of dry theology." It is no mere sentimentalism, but the outpouring of a great soul in love for his fellow-men. This aspect probably comes as a revelation to many who only realise the purely intellectual side of his teaching.

Of his winsome character and brotherly sympathy I could quote a dozen instances, but let this suffice. It is extracted from Dr. Parker's last public letter: "He is a fighter! Yes, undoubtedly! But he is more—ininitely more! A tenderer and deeper sympathiser in the time of trouble I have no expectation of ever meeting. I have heard him on the platform, and I have seen him in my own sick-chamber, and have fervently thanked God for the man of war and the gentle messenger of healing. His letters, say they, are weighty, but his brotherly sympathy has a 'goldenness' all its own and precious beyond reckoning."

With children Dr. Clifford is always at home, and instinctively wins their affections. In his journeyings up and down the country he makes many acquaintances amongst little folk, and nothing delights him more than to receive a message in their own handwriting. On one occasion, and with unbounded pleasure, he showed me the following: "With love from Marjorie to dear Dr. Clifford." This was only one among many such epistles.

Who can adequately describe what he is to the thousands—nay, hundreds of thousands—of Free Churchmen, both at home and abroad, in the present Education conflict. I have heard the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.A., describe him as “my old fighting chief,” and this happily voices the feelings of the rank and file. An American wrote to the *Baptist Argus* (Kentucky) that he overheard a countryman say at the close of a great speech Dr. Clifford delivered at Bristol, February 16, 1903, “I wish that little man could live for a couple of hundred years!” The organisers of meetings undoubtedly echo the wish.

In 1894 Dr. Robertson Nicoll said in the *British Weekly*, at the conclusion of the London School Board election contest, “Dr. Clifford has fought with magnificent courage, determination, and skill, and he will hold a higher place than ever in the affection of Liberals and Nonconformists.” What shall we say to-day? This is a national as well as a Metropolitan struggle, and consequently more momentous and far-reaching. Can we say less than was stated ten years ago? There have been thousands throughout the country who have fought this battle of religious freedom with great self-sacrifice, courage, and steadfastness, but there are only six or seven men, who, either on the public platform, in the press, or at the head of great organisations, have stood in the front fighting line. By general consent he takes precedence of them all.

One of Dr. Clifford's most cheery qualities is his optimism. His

"High endeavours are an inward light,
That makes the path before him always bright."

He sees the best in men, and hopes, prays, and works to achieve the best. This is one reason why Browning so distinctly appeals to him. In studying the preacher's sermons you find repeated many times the poet's faith in a Father's love. The familiar quotation, "God's in His heaven, all's well with the world," occurs and re-occurs in his homilies and exhortations. It is easy to suggest that he is too hopeful and buoyant, and that he sees the goal without accurately measuring the intervening distance. This is, perhaps, occasionally true. But no leader wins by pessimism. To promote a cause one must possess a triumphant belief not only in its justice but in its ultimate success. Dr. Clifford may at times be saddened by the materialism of the age or by the pseudo-imperialism rampant two years ago, but he never retires disgusted to his tent weary of the battle or, dispirited by the odds against him, hangs up his sword to sit listlessly before the fire. "One fight more!" is ever his cry.

This is not the occasion or the time to attempt a detailed estimate of Dr. Clifford's character and personality. He has lived so much in the public eye that his life is open to all men. His limitations must be as completely apparent as his successes. If faults

there be—and he is the first to confess them—these arise from nature more than intention. The purpose of these pages, however, is not simply to tell the story of a notable life, but to inspire Free Churchmen with the impression of one who has adopted Goethe's words, "in wholeness, goodness, truth, strenuously to live."

To sum up, we say with Browning :—

"A people is but the attempt of many
To rise to the completer life of one ;
And those who live as models for the mass
Are singly of more value than they all.
Such man are you, and such a time is this."

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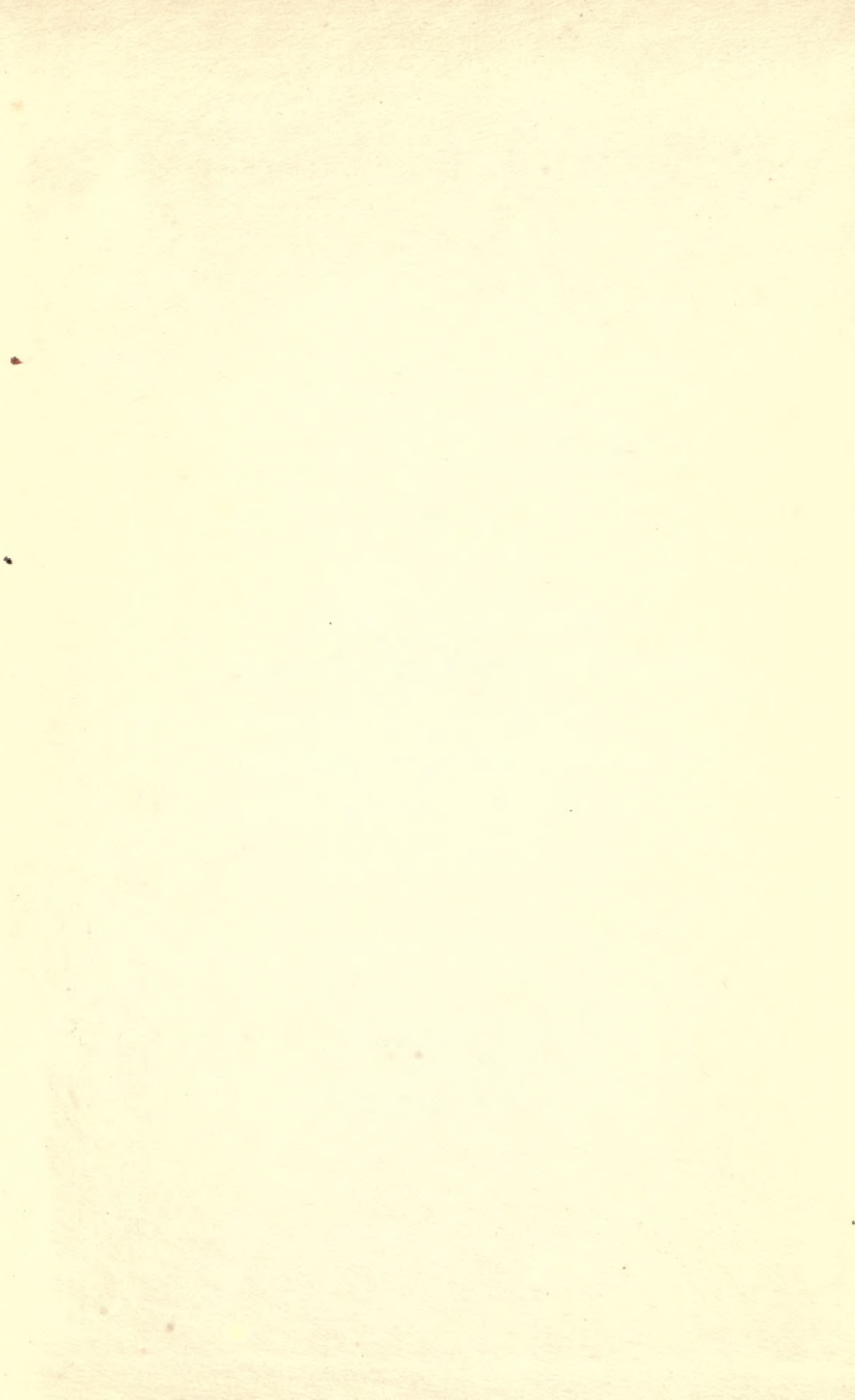
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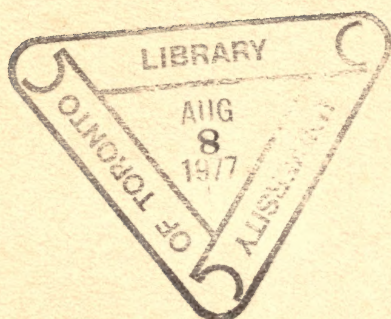
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